United Nations A/55/PV.11

General Assembly

Official Records

Fifty-fifth session

11th plenary meeting
Tuesday, 12 September 2000, 3 p.m.
New York

President: Mr. Holkeri ..... (Finland)

The meeting was called to order at 3.05 p.m.

Agenda item 9 *(continued)*

General debate

Address by Mr. Patrick Leclercq, Prime Minister, Minister of State and Director for External Relations of the Principality of Monaco

The President: The Assembly will now hear a statement by the Prime Minister, Minister of State and Director for External Relations of the Principality of Monaco.

Mr. Patrick Leclercq, Prime Minister, Minister of State and Director for External Relations of the Principality of Monaco, was escorted to the rostrum.

The President: I have great pleasure in welcoming the Prime Minister, Minister of State and Director for External Relations of the Principality of Monaco, His Excellency Mr. Patrick Leclercq, and inviting him to address the General Assembly.

Mr. Leclercq (Monaco) (*spoke in French*): Allow me, first of all, to congratulate you most warmly, Mr. President, on your election to the presidency of the fifty-fifth session of the General Assembly. Allow me also to express the conviction that under your authority our work will be conducted with the same high level of vision and competence demonstrated by the President of your country, Ms. Tarja Halonen, in her Co-Chairpersonship of the Millennium Summit at the side of the President of Namibia, Mr. Sam Nujoma. I also extend my thanks and congratulations to the Secretary-General, who continues to imbue the international Organization and the entire international staff he commands with the virtues of rigour, moderation and integrity that he embodies in his service to the great ideals of the Organization.

Those are the same ideals that have just been reaffirmed by the Heads of State and Government. They also reaffirmed their confidence in the capacity of the United Nations to ensure the advancement of, and respect for, those ideals so long as the international community gives the Organization the necessary support through a renewed commitment.

For a small State such as Monaco, nothing is more important than such a reaffirmation of the ideals that should govern relations between sovereign States in a spirit of equality and dignity. It is not a question of disregarding the profound differences that may exist between States with regard to their objective characteristics, influence or weight in the affairs of the world. However, it is appropriate to reaffirm the fact that, no matter how small, each State should enjoy the right to respect, and that all States are be bound by the same rules in conducting international affairs.

Its history of over seven centuries makes it possible for Monaco to gauge what that reaffirmation represents, a reaffirmation supported by the common determination of all States represented here. For its

This record contains the text of speeches delivered in English and of the interpretation of speeches delivered in the other languages. Corrections should be submitted to the original languages only. They should be incorporated in a copy of the record and sent under the signature of a member of the delegation concerned to the Chief of the Verbatim Reporting Service, room C-178. Corrections will be issued after the end of the session in a consolidated corrigendum.

00-63938 (E)

part, the Principality associates itself fully with the impetus provided by the Millennium Summit. To the extent it is able, Monaco intends to contribute to developing the full potential of that impetus.

Allow me, before I touch on the principal issues we will be dealing with at this session — in which Monaco has a longstanding interest — to address a topic that seems to require some clarification: the Principality of Monaco itself.

Though the notoriety enjoyed by the Principality seems well established, since the whole world has heard of it, all too often people have a one-sided view of it in which it is reduced to a set of appealing but vaguely archaic clichés.

Many people still believe that the casino is the main source of income for the State, while in fact the assessment paid by the Societé des Bains de Mer, which manages the casino, yields only 4 per cent of public revenue. The rest derives primarily from taxes and income from public property. In truth, the structure of our budget is not very different from that of any other country. As concerns expenses, many might envy us, as we are able each year to devote a third of our resources to investing in civil engineering projects.

Many people also believe that we depend to a large extent on tourism. We are pleased, of course, that Monaco attracts about 6 million visitors a year. But here again reality contradicts the image of a tourism-dependent economy, because tourism accounts for only 10 per cent of the principality's revenues. Of the rest, 40 per cent are the product of local or international commerce, 20 per cent of banking activities, 10 percent of industrial activities — emanating from about 100 high-technology, non-polluting companies — and the rest derive from a variety of services.

Clearly, Monaco, rather than being a sort of old-style paradise for a happy few, has all the characteristics of a highly developed country.

In this connection, we must also note to what extent the Principality provides jobs in the region. Though Monaco has 30,000 residents, it has 38,000 workers, some 30,000 of which live outside of Monaco and commute to the Principality every day, which enables them and their families to enjoy the same social benefits and educational, sports and medical amenities as the people of Monaco themselves.

Monaco is undoubtedly a small country, but it does not live in the past. On the contrary, we have a broad and modern outlook, and it is this vision that has enabled us to become a highly developed State that use state-of-the-art technology and is involved in massive projects, such as the one that has enabled us to build out over the sea and thus expand our territory by more than 20 per cent during the reign of the current Sovereign Prince.

Although all of this is based on unarguable fact, some still question the source of our prosperity. To our surprise and indignation, we recently heard it said that the Principality was too lenient with respect to certain criminal activities. Quite the opposite: we have sought ways and means of combating criminal activities and have consistently reaffirmed our will to strengthen the measures we take to meet the challenges of today.

All foreign activities require Government authorization, which is granted only following an in-depth investigation. Nearly every week the Governmental Council must veto certain projects. In the area of banking and finance, monitoring systems have been set up, and here we also rely on the help of our great friend and neighbour, France. The legislation in place to combat money-laundering is the same as that in most developed countries. In fact, in certain areas, it is even more stringent.

Monaco has set up an information and monitoring service on financial flows to allow for the involvement of legal authorities when necessary and for the exchange of information with the equivalent foreign institutions. The Principality is in no way a *laissez-faire* zone in which all types of wealth can be accumulated. Nor can it be termed an "opaque" financial venue, unless we believe that transparency does not exist anywhere.

Some see Monaco as a kind of fiscal paradise, as if we had attempted to create artificial mechanisms to attract floating capital and wealthy people trying to avoid taxation in their own countries. The truth is that direct taxation was abolished in 1869, at a time when there was no tax on the income of natural persons anywhere in the world, and thus competition could not have been an issue. The fact that this situation continues to prevail today certainly places Monaco among the countries having "soft" tax laws. But there are, in fact, taxes: two-thirds of the country's income emanates from direct or indirect fiscal contributions,

that is to say, the value-added tax and the tax on the profits realized from commercial, industrial and intellectual activities.

In sum, Monaco is a highly developed country that wishes to be an active participant in the European sphere and that observes all international commitments to combat present-day scourges such as financial criminality and money laundering, which pose a clear threat to the equilibrium of financial systems. The Principality is, by its very nature, supportive of its environment, but this is also the will of leadership.

I now turn to the basis of its external activities, which also reflect its status as a small State focusing on a few areas in which its tradition, experience and abilities can provide added value at the international level.

One of our priorities has always been humanitarian action and social development. This was made clear when, on 26 June last, His Serene Highness the Hereditary Prince of Monaco, signed, in the presence of the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees, the two Optional Protocols to the Convention on the Rights of the Child, on the involvement of children in armed conflict and on the sale of children, child prostitution and child pornography.

The actions taken in relation to the World Summit for Social Development will be followed up during the special session to review the achievement of the goals of the World Summit for Children, to be held next year. We expect that session effectively to address the issue of the protection of children, who are always the first among the civilian population to suffer in time of war.

The Principality also wishes to contribute to development at the public level as well as in terms of the non-governmental organizations, which are very active in Monaco, where they receive the strong support of all those who feel themselves morally obligated to contribute to the activities undertaken in a spirit of solidarity by a country that allows them to lead a privileged life. We expect from the upcoming Conference on the fight against poverty in the least developed countries, to be held next May, and in particular from the 10-year review of the outcome of the United Nations Conference on Environment and Development, known as Rio + 10, a new impetus for international cooperation in these areas so vital to the future of humanity, in which progress is currently lagging.

It goes without saying that environmental issues, including in particular those relating to the marine environment, have always been priority concerns for Monaco, situated as it is on the Mediterranean coast. We will continue to follow up on these activities and to take initiatives along the lines of those we have been promoting.

I can only reaffirm the role that the Principality plays in all relevant forums to intensify the struggle against the severe scourges of our times, such as terrorism, trafficking in drugs and in human beings, and the illegal financial flows which they create or sustain.

Let me conclude by expressing the hope that I have been able to provide a clearer view of the situation in present-day Monaco, a situation of contrasts. Monaco is one of the smallest countries in the world, but at the same time one of the most highly developed. It is an anachronism for those with an unrealistic or prejudiced view, but its economic structures reflect great modernity and dynamism. Its image may be identified with play and leisure, but the fact is that it creates jobs well beyond its borders. It is viewed as a curiosity, yet it remains an acknowledged sovereign State, as proved by its participation in the principal international organizations and by the fact that its voice is heard in areas where its contribution deserves to be taken into account.

I could continue that list of contradictions, but I think those are sufficient to provide a key to what His Serene Highness Prince Rainier III said when he opened the fabulous new Grimaldi Forum — a conference and cultural centre in Monaco — in summarizing the inspiration that has always sustained his dynasty and the Principality over the centuries:

> "One does not need a great territory to have great dreams, or a great number of people to make them come true".

The President: On behalf of the General Assembly, I wish to thank the Prime Minister, Minister of State and Director for External Relations of the Principality of Monaco for the statement he has just made.

Mr. Patrick Leclercq, Prime Minister, Minister of State and Director for External Relations of the Principality of Monaco, was escorted from the rostrum.

Address by Mr. Gnassingbé Eyadema, President of the Togolese Republic

The President: The Assembly will now hear an address by the President of the Togolese Republic.

Mr. Gnassingbé Eyadema, President of the Togolese Republic, was escorted into the General Assembly Hall.

The President: On behalf of the General Assembly, I have the honour to welcome to the United Nations the President of the Togolese Republic, His Excellency Mr. Gnassingbé Eyadema, and to invite him to address the Assembly.

President Eyadema (*spoke in French*): Before discussing some of the concerns of the African continent and our views on some of the problems facing the United Nations, I should like at the outset to congratulate you, Mr. President, on having been chosen to guide the work of our world body at this important session. The high office to which you have risen in your country, Finland, and the major role that Finland plays in the world constitute a guarantee that the General Assembly is truly in good hands.

I wish also to pay tribute to our brother the Secretary-General, Mr. Kofi Annan, whose ability and dedication we highly appreciate.

The General Assembly session that took place 40 years ago was seen as the session of Africa. It was at that session that many newly independent African countries participated in the work of United Nations bodies for the first time as States Members of the Organization.

Yet despite the progress our continent has made over the past 40 years, Africa continues to be weakened by the ills of underdevelopment. Today, 33 of the world's 48 least developed countries are African countries. In other words, three fifths of the States of our continent belong to that group of countries that are lagging behind in the pursuit of development.

As the world's least developed region, Africa suffers from a number of specific ills which hamper its growth and for which it is important that the international community help provide a substantial, effective remedy. Here I would first mention two pandemics that ravage the continent and whose human and economic consequences are particularly severe and alarming: AIDS and malaria. We are most grateful for the initiative taken last January by the Security Council to consider the question of AIDS in Africa. More recently, the Thirteenth International AIDS Conference, held at Durban, South Africa, took stock of the situation regarding the advance of the epidemic and of possible ways to control it. Members are undoubtedly aware that 70 per cent of the 34 million to 35 million AIDS sufferers worldwide live in sub-Saharan Africa, and that in some African countries schools have been closed because of the ravages of AIDS among the teachers.

In a number of countries the skilled workforce has been considerably reduced by AIDS. The number of orphans in many countries affected by this epidemic is relatively high, thus exacerbating the economic and social situation of those countries. Therefore, it is essential that the international community rapidly and genuinely mobilize in order to help the African continent control AIDS and eliminate its ravaging effects.

With respect to malaria, a special summit of heads of State and Government of the countries concerned was held on 24-25 April in Abuja, Nigeria, where a plan of action was adopted to combat the disease. Malaria kills one person somewhere in the world every 30 seconds. The Assembly of Heads of State and Government of the Organization of African Unity (OAU), meeting in Lomé from 10-12 July this year, appealed to the United Nations to proclaim the period 2001-2010 the decade to combat malaria. We firmly hope that this Assembly will respond positively to our appeal, at this session, taking the necessary measures to ensure the decade's success.

The African debt problem was also of concern to the OAU Heads of State and Government at the Lomé summit. At a session more than 12 years ago, the African countries adopted a common position on the African foreign debt crisis. Unfortunately, our continent continues to be the region of the world where the debt burden is heaviest. As the General Assembly noted last year in resolution 54/202,

> "the continuing debt and debt-servicing problems of heavily indebted developing countries"

are one of the factors that hinder their development and economic growth. This finding should motivate the international community, especially the developed countries and international financial institutions, to take more courageous measures, such as the outright cancellation of the African countries' debt. Such a decision would greatly contribute to the success of the efforts of our countries, which have committed themselves to implementing sustained programmes to eradicate poverty.

That is why we strongly support the proposals of Secretary-General Kofi Annan, who believes that the industrialized countries should take a number of measures for the benefit of the African countries and other developing regions to ensure the possibility of their making significant progress in the new world economy.

The African continent is grateful to the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) for its invaluable assistance over many years, resulting in the carrying out of numerous projects. However, the continuous decline in UNDP resources worries us, because it affects our development prospects.

At a more global level, we note that major transnational companies, which play a crucial role in the world economy, are remarkably absent from United Nations economic forums. As in the International Labour Organization (ILO), where representatives of Governments, employers and employees work together, it is desirable that in the Economic and Social Council representatives of Governments should sit side by side with those of multinational companies. That would enhance the effectiveness and impact of this important United Nations body. The international community, for its part, should prove, by decisive action, that it truly wishes to put an end to the suffering of the poorest peoples, the largest proportion of whom, unfortunately, are in Africa.

I take this opportunity to thank President Bill Clinton for having the United States Congress approve a law making possible the establishment of a closer partnership between the United States of America and the African States.

I also welcome the convening in Cairo in April this year of the first Africa-Europe summit. We place a great deal of hope in such meetings, which can only strengthen the existing cooperation between the European Union and the African countries.

It is well known that our continent is not afflicted solely by the economic underdevelopment that puts it in last place in terms of the quality of life. It is also a region of the world where numerous lethal conflicts continue to sow death and desolation. Consequently, Africa accounts for the largest number of refugees and internally displaced persons. We are grateful to the United Nations and its specialized agencies, particularly the Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees, for their assistance in helping our continent to control various conflicts and mitigate their disastrous consequences.

We must recognize very sadly, however, that, by comparison to other regions of the world that have also experienced bloody conflicts, the attention that our continent receives from the international community is somewhat meagre. We strongly urge the Security Council to demonstrate the same concern for us that it bestows on other regions of the world that have been affected by conflicts, inter alia, Europe and Asia.

We subscribe to the relevant recommendations made by the Panel of experts which the Secretary-General has mandated to consider all problems related to the improved use of peace operations. We are of the view that the mandates of United Nations peacekeeping missions should be clear, credible and achievable. These missions must be adequately financed and rapidly deployed where they are expected. They must be capable of fulfilling their mandates successfully and able to defend themselves and control all those who would seek to hinder their action on the ground.

In the area of peacekeeping in Africa, the Organization of African Unity (OAU) has endowed itself over the years with valuable instruments for managing conflicts, such as the Mechanism for Conflict Prevention, the Conflict Management Centre and the Early Warning System. More than five years after the creation of these mechanisms, we believe that they should be complemented by the establishment of an operational and effective African peacekeeping force. If such a force were created, it would discourage all subversive actions that underpin conflicts.

That is why I have proposed, with a view to strengthening that force, the establishment of an African institute for peace and conflict prevention, with the assistance of the United Nations and the OAU. This institution would train African cadres in the art of

negotiation, conflict management and the culture of peace.

The persistence of conflicts in Africa seriously affects the continent's opportunities for development and hampers its efforts to achieve unity. It was with a view to remedying this situation that the heads of State and Government of the OAU decided in Syrte, Libya, on 9 September 1999, to transform the OAU into a new organization to be known as the African Union. Its Charter was unanimously adopted at the 36th Assembly of Heads of State and Government of the OAU, held at Lomé last July. We are convinced that, with the birth of the African Union, the continent will hasten its process of economic and political integration and strengthen the peace and solidarity that are indispensable to development.

The General Assembly was right to convene the Millennium Summit that was held here last week from 6 to 8 September. That historic conference was held to consider the role of the United Nations in the world at the dawn of the twenty-first century. In my message to the Millennium Summit, I stressed two basic problems. One related to the activities of the United Nations in the maintenance of international peace and security. The other concerned the stakes of development, particularly in relation to Africa.

When the Organization was established 55 years ago, two thirds of its current Members did not exist as sovereign States and their peoples still lived under the colonial yoke. The planet had a scant 2.5 billion inhabitants, as compared to 6 billion today. Despite the expansion of the Security Council over the years, its composition has in truth remained virtually unchanged since the establishment of the United Nations. To use the words of Secretary-General Kofi Annan, this composition

> "does not fully represent either the character or the needs of our globalized world". (*A/52/2000, para. 44*)

We therefore think that it is high time to reconsider the composition of the Security Council, with a view to admitting new permanent members selected from the new economic Powers that have emerged since the Second World War, to which would be added regional Powers from the developing countries.

These are a few ideas that I wanted to contribute to this general debate.

Despite its imperfections and shortcomings, I think that the United Nations is irreplaceable, but we must do everything possible to enhance its impact and influence.

In conclusion, I would like to underscore that the African continent, despite its difficulties, continues to be a region of great potential wealth; however, its resources have inadequately been inventoried, developed and exploited.

We must not despair and think that Africa will not overcome these difficulties. We are resolved to do everything within our power to improve the political, economic and social situation of our continent.

We simply need the benevolent assistance of all those who are today richer and are prepared to join us to bolster our efforts.

The President: On behalf of the General Assembly, I wish to thank the President of the Togolese Republic for the statement he has just made.

Mr. Gnassingbé Eyadema, President of the Togolese Republic, was escorted from the General Assembly Hall.

Agenda item 9 *(continued)*

General debate

The President: I give the floor to His Excellency Mr. Indulis Bērziņš, Minister for Foreign Affairs of Latvia.

Mr. Bērziņš (Latvia): Finding ourselves in a new century and in a new millennium, it is natural to review what we have done right and to meditate also on what we could have done better. The United Nations is the forum and the system that allows us to contemplate the status of the world's development from the widest possible perspective.

Latvia is small, but the success of our democracy and the success of our efforts at European integration will have a strong positive effect on the destiny of the Baltic Sea region. The success of an Organization like the United Nations can be measured by how its work has affected the lives of individual people in all countries. In the age of globalization the challenge we

collectively face is to ensure that all can be beneficiaries.

As a result of the revolution in information technology, the world has grown smaller. Nations and people are closer to each other than ever before. This underlines the importance of the principle of universality. Today the decisions taken in one part of the globe affect people and nations all around the world. This calls for wider representation and, in the case of the United Nations, for the reform of the Security Council, which needs to be carried out to reflect the present political and economic realities.

To respond to modern challenges, the United Nations needs both political will and courage. In this regard, I would like to express my appreciation to the Secretary-General for his efforts in strengthening and modernizing the Organization through its reforms.

The United Nations also needs to be better equipped to prevent and manage conflicts. Unfortunately, the demand for peacekeeping is still high. The Member States, both individually and collectively, must do more to meet this demand. Latvia has done its best to make its practical contribution to peace and security. During the past year Latvia's peacekeepers have been present in Bosnia and Herzegovina and Kosovo as a part of North Atlantic Treaty Organization-led forces. In accordance with the United Nations decision to extend the mandate for the operation in Kosovo, Latvia will continue its participation and will allocate more resources for peacekeeping operations in next year's budget.

As a future member of the European Union, Latvia attaches great importance to the development of a common European security and defence policy that will increase the European capabilities in conflict prevention and crisis management. We are willing to contribute our forces and to participate in European Union operations.

To provide the United Nations with proper tools for peacekeeping, the reforms of the scale of contributions must be implemented to reflect the capabilities and responsibilities of every Member State. At the same time, the United Nations must ensure that the resources are spent wisely and operations managed properly. For its part, Latvia is considering a review of its contribution to the peacekeeping budget with a view to gradually increasing its share.

Human rights must remain high on the agenda of the United Nations in the twenty-first century. As a member of the Commission on Human Rights and its Bureau, Latvia remains strongly committed to the strengthening of the United Nations human rights mechanisms. In particular, the role of the Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights and its programmes, including the development of national capacities for the promotion and protection of human rights, should be strengthened.

Latvia remains committed to the establishment of the International Criminal Court. We welcome the efforts of its Preparatory Commission in tackling the task of finalizing the texts of the rules of procedure and evidence, and the elements of crime, in a timely manner. Those who commit crimes against humanity must not go unpunished.

Fifty years of foreign occupation left us with a heavy social, economic and psychological burden. From the time of our return to independence in 1991, Latvia has made every effort to overcome this legacy. To be successful in the new millennium, we need the consolidated input of all our people, regardless of their occupation, ethnicity or place of residence. That is why the Latvian Government has elaborated its programme of integration of society. This is an experiment and in many ways unique. The integration programme is our vision of how our society can function most effectively on the basis of democracy and respect for human rights.

This programme complements the integration measures being implemented through education with the help of the United Nations Development Programme. The programme will increase public participation and it will reduce differences among the various regions of Latvia. It is a sign of Latvia's readiness to explore new ways of improving the living standards and the social climate.

Latvia's international role has grown in the past decade of freedom. Each year we are able to do more for the people of Latvia and the international community. With the beginning earlier this year of talks for European Union membership, Latvia entered a new phase in its international relations. This November Latvia will assume the presidency of the Council of Europe — our first presidency in a pan-European organization.

Latvia is determined to participate even more actively in the work of the United Nations. Therefore Latvia has put forward its candidacy to be a non-permanent member of the Security Council for the period of 2006 to 2007. I believe Latvia is ready to assume this high responsibility.

It is an honour to present Latvia's perspective here today at the outset of the fifty-fifth session of the General Assembly. I wish all of us a very useful and productive session.

The President: I now call the Minister for Foreign Affairs of Senegal, His Excellency Mr. Cheikh Tidiane Gadio.

Mr. Gadio (Senegal) (*spoke in French*): The General Assembly has unanimously chosen you, Sir, to guide our debates. This is a tribute both to your qualities as a diplomat and statesman and to your country, Finland, for the very positive role it plays in addressing the great issues of our modern world. Senegal is happy to convey to you, through me, its congratulations and hopes for success in leading this session.

You were preceded in this office by His Excellency Mr. Theo-Ben Gurirab, Minister for Foreign Affairs of our sister Republic of Namibia, who presided in the name of our continent, Africa. He guided our debates successfully throughout his mandate, which was full of important events for our Organization.

I would like at the same time to pay tribute to the work of our Secretary-General, Mr. Kofi Annan, who has devoted himself and all his energy to our Organization, in an increasingly complex world. Let us pay him the tribute he richly deserves for the success of the Millennium Summit, which proved to the world that Mr. Kofi Annan has achieved what he set out to do, i.e. to restore the dignity and prestige of the Organization as the indispensable forum for concertation and concord, and as a peacemaker and promoter of progress for all.

I would also like, finally, to welcome the delegation of Tuvalu, which has become the 189th Member State.

History will recall that, in the framework of the Millennium Assembly, the Millennium Summit gathered in this venerable Hall our illustrious heads of State and Government, who examined the role our Organization is being called upon to play in the twenty-first century. These eminent dignitaries thereby gave us a new vision of how to take up the great challenge posed by globalization — by promoting a new human international order.

The first half of the year 2000 was also an intense time for the United Nations and the international community, what with the holding in June of two major special sessions of the General Assembly. These two special sessions — following up on and reviewing the Fourth World Conference on Women, which was held in Beijing, and the World Summit on Social Development, held in Copenhagen — produced encouraging results. My delegation cherishes the hope that these sessions will contribute to strengthening the status and role of women in our respective societies by promoting gender equality, the eradication both of poverty and of its feminization, and the promotion of productive employment and social integration. If we do not fully respect women and recognize their essential contribution to the progress of our societies, our world is going continue walking on one leg, when obviously there are two.

Despite these new perspectives and their historical importance, this session is not without causes for grave concern and even despair. Despite our ongoing efforts, a number of conflicts are persisting and deepening. From Sierra Leone to the Democratic Republic of the Congo, from Angola to the border between Ethiopia and Eritrea, from Burundi to Somalia, from Kosovo to East Timor we hear the echoes and see the images and the horror of conflict zones.

Senegal would like to here voice its great concern at what is occurring between Guinea and Liberia. Our country calls upon these two countries to carry out a brotherly, peaceful dialogue in accordance with the purposes and principles of the Charter of the Organization of African Unity (OAU). We make the same urgent request of the political leaders of Côte d'Ivoire, urging them to find a political compromise that will enable the great country, Côte d'Ivoire, which we love so well, to live in peace, stability and unity.

It is in view of such situations that regional organizations, aware of the fact that Africa is paying a high price for all these conflicts, have resolutely undertaken to seek political solutions, with the help of the international community. This is what occurred in

Sierra Leone, where the Lomé Agreement, reached under the aegis of the Economic Community of West African States, allowed us to nourish hopes for a lasting solution. The same can be said for Angola and the Democratic Republic of the Congo and the two Lusaka agreements of 1994 and 1999, respectively. Unfortunately, these praiseworthy efforts often run up against a lack of commitment on the part of rebel movements or armed factions to the very agreements that they themselves have signed.

However, in spite of this bleak situation, we should not give in to discouragement. As the constitution of the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization says,

> "since wars begin in the minds of men, it is in the minds of men that the defences of peace must be constructed".

We have a moral obligation to continue to act with determination and perseverance, bringing the protagonists of these conflicts to recognize and embrace a culture of peace that will allow people to progress, committing themselves to forgiveness and reconciliation.

It is in this context that my delegation congratulates the members of the Panel on United Nations Peace Operations for its recent report. The subtlety of the analyses and the relevance of the recommendations contained therein open new perspectives for the United Nations in terms of reducing tensions and wisely managing conflicts. Senegal attaches great importance to the consideration of the Panel's recommendations, so that a new peacekeeping doctrine can be established.

Experience has shown us that the language of weapons, as well as feeding conflicts by illicitly exploiting natural resources, cannot produce humanly acceptable solutions. The only possible solution is one that allows peoples to fully enjoy conditions of peace and economic and social security.

It is in this context that the Constitutive Act of the African Union was signed on 12 July at Lomé, at the thirty-sixth session of the Assembly of Heads of State and Government of the Organization of African Unity (OAU), committing Africa to resolutely engage in a spirit of unity in finding African solutions to its many challenges. This is why the President of the Republic, Maître Abdoulaye Wade, a convinced Pan-Africanist, led to its completion the procedure making Senegal the second African country to ratify this historic Act.

Before Lomé, Africa had already taken another meaningful decision, at the Algiers summit, by proclaiming 2000 the year of peace and concord on the continent.

The advent of democracy in Guinea-Bissau and the efforts to bring about a gradual return to normality in the life of its citizens and institutions are part of the response to the demand for democracy. Is not the recent peaceful political transition in my country, which brought Maître Abdoulaye Wade to the highest executive position, further proof that our peoples can choose their leaders in a sovereign and democratic fashion?

I now turn to the Middle East, where my country has noted the major breakthroughs this year in the Israeli-Arab conflict, at the heart of which is the question of Palestine. The evacuation of Lebanese territory by the Israeli occupation troops and the long and delicate negotiations at Camp David between Palestinians and Israelis give rise to hope, despite the talks' relative failure. Our hopes include that of seeing the creation of a space of lasting cohabitation between Israelis and Palestinians, as well as between Israel and its Arab neighbours, with respect for the dignity and rights of the peoples and States of the region.

It is only right to pay tribute to all the participants in this positive development, in particular the Palestinian and Israeli leadership, who, thanks to their political courage and sense of history have opened this avenue towards a new dawn of peace in the Middle East. Senegal reiterates its constant support for President Yasser Arafat and its admiration for his courage and political lucidity. He has never dropped the olive branch to which he referred here in 1974. Our congratulations also go to President Clinton. We express our support for the Prime Minister of Israel, Mr. Barak, as well as the other actors in the peace process, whom we commend for their determined efforts in search of peace and reconciliation between all the peoples of the region. We hope that their efforts will soon be crowned with positive results.

The year 2000 was also marked by a relaxation of major importance in relations between the two Koreas. This highly significant political development will contribute to consolidating peace and security on the

Korean peninsula and in the entire subregion of South-East Asia. The United Nations, universal symbol of the peoples' aspirations to peace and security, should make a significant contribution to protecting the ongoing process between the two Koreas.

It is in the name of rapprochement between peoples and the principle of universality that my country supports the request of the Republic of China on Taiwan to rejoin the concert of free nations within the United Nations and its specialized agencies, and thus to participate in the consolidation of international peace and security.

With the completion last June of the definition of what constitutes crimes, and of the rules of procedure and testimony, the Preparatory Committee for the International Criminal Court passed a significant milestone in the establishment of this important legal institution. This progress and the new ratifications of the Rome Statute, are encouraging signs of the international community's rejection of criminal faits accomplis, injustice and impunity. I repeat Senegal's support for the process, which should bring about a credible, independent and efficient International Criminal Court.

Building and consolidating peace also, and above all, means to meeting the chronic challenge of underdevelopment, for, as we know, development is another name for peace. Twenty years ago the North-South Commission on development problems strongly emphasized that where hunger reigns there cannot be peace, and that whoever wants to banish war must also banish poverty. Yet today, despite that warning, poverty persists and grows, although we have the means to fight it.

We dare to hope that next year's high-level meeting on financing development will be a unique opportunity to examine in depth the causes of the decline in official development assistance and will find ways and means to redress this worrying situation: the urgent need to deal with the debt crisis, rebalance international trade and deal with the risks of marginalization resulting from globalization.

I recall President Wade's appeal, warmly received by his peers, for an in-depth analysis of the African debt and for a world summit on globalization to correct its injustices and contradictions.

I would also like to reiterate Senegal's support for cooperation frameworks such as the EU-ACP agreements and the Tokyo International Conference on African Development (TICAD). We hope that recent decisions made at the G-8 Summit in Okinawa, as well as the American initiative, "African Growth and Opportunity Act", will be the starting point of a new partnership based on solidarity and mutual benefits.

Development is inseparable from the promotion and protection of human rights, the rule of law and sound governance, principles to which my country remains firmly attached. By creating a human rights unit attached to the presidency of the Republic, the Head of State has shown his personal commitment to the protection and promoting of citizens' fundamental rights and freedoms by the Administration and at every level of public life. Senegal will continue to make every effort to consolidate the foundations of the rule of law, to protect human rights defenders and to honour the obligations it assumes by its adherence to international legal instruments on human rights.

With the momentum created by the success in Senegal of the peaceful change-over of political power and a peaceful transition, my country feels equipped to continue to defend the image of a serene Africa, a mature Africa, a tolerant and democratic Africa.

Today, more than ever, our people wonder about the political will and capacity of our States to take advantage of the current international climate, which seems propitious for a dynamic of peace and for taking into account the human dimension in technological innovations.

In Africa our thoughts often turn to the anguish caused by the ravages of HIV/AIDS, although with a 1.6 per cent rate, Senegal strengthens the hope that this scourge will be defeated.

Fifty years ago, at the end of the planetary nightmare of the Second World War, a hope and conviction were born: that men and women throughout the world would do everything possible to prevent new wars from breaking out and would work together to ensure respect for the right of each individual to freedom, justice and progress. Today the intellectual and material resources available to humanity should logically be increasingly dedicated to building a future of peace, progress and shared happiness. But it must be said that for the great majority of peoples and nations

the international situation does not meet their aspirations to peace and progress.

In the final analysis, to build a pan-human society which is at peace with itself we must unite all our energies to create the basis for more human development with greater solidarity, bringing new hope to future generations. This is the importance and meaning of the Millennium Summit, in urging us to make a collective contribution to strengthening our Organization for the salvation of humanity.

As it has become a tradition in my country, I will leave the last word of my statement to the inimitable Senegal-Cameroon poet of love and hope, David Mandesijop, who said:

"Hope lived in us as in a citadel."

I hope the aspiration to a more just and happy world will live within us all as an impregnable citadel so, as Mandesijop said, that spring will grow beneath our footsteps.

The Acting Co-Chairperson (Finland): I call on the Minister of Foreign Affairs of Kazakhstan, His Excellency Mr. Erlan Idrissov.

Mr. Idrissov (Kazakhstan): The current political debate is taking place against the background that is not quite usual. This Hall just heard statements by the participants in the Millennium Summit. Unprecedented round tables have just been conducted. The last several days have brought unusual hectic activity to the United Nations and the city that hosts the headquarters of our Organization.

The most spectacular thing, however, is that the Summit has triggered an intellectual burst, an explosion of collective thinking. Apparently, this has been predetermined by a special quality of this particular moment in time, as we find ourselves at the threshold not just of a new century, but of a new millennium. Our acquisitive mind tries to look forward as far as possible and aspires to see there, against all odds, a better future. Such is the predominant human trait -- to look forward with optimism.

Our past experience, however, warns us against excessive euphoria and illusions. We realize that the world is still full of threats, and our common impulse is to understand these threats and their causes and to find ways to overcome them collectively.

This is what I felt during the days I spent at the Summit. I am probably not the only one who thinks the same way. But let us hope that the intellectual tide generated by the Summit will not just die down in the humdrum of everyday life, but will force us to get down to business in order to make our planet a safe and prosperous place.

As we approach the new millennium, we surely want to take a fresh look at the road we have travelled so far. At the threshold of a new century, we are in a position to say that our most important achievement is that the world has become freer. I believe that the key word explaining the substance of the changes that are taking place today should be the word renewal. By our definition, it means an absolutely new era of relations between nations, free of the vestiges of the past: pressure and *diktat*. It should be a triumph of the principle of genuine democracy and justice when all States have equal rights and obligations, irrespective of their economic and political differences.

The renewal of international relations should be guided by the understanding that we live now in a global and interdependent world whose overriding principle is global partnership. The United Nations Secretary-General has rightly proclaimed a three-pronged task: freedom from fear, freedom from want and saving the human environment, precisely in the context of globalization. It is also true that globalization should not overshadow the problems and concerns of the ordinary man. Our efforts will be futile if we do not address the issues we face today in this logical sequence.

Let me dwell on the three main components of our common goal: making the world a safe, free and prosperous place.

While recognizing that global security and stability increasingly depend on economic, environmental and humanitarian aspects of development, we should not belittle the importance of the military and political dimension of security. A fundamental issue of the elimination of weapons of mass destruction continues to be a matter of our common concern. International instruments in this field, first of all the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons, the Comprehensive Nuclear-Test-Ban Treaty and the Chemical Weapons Convention have not yet gained universal support and, thus, cannot be fully effective. The situation with regard to the Anti-

Ballistic Missile Treaty is also a cause for concern. We call on all countries to radically change this state of affairs and to support the Secretary-General's proposal to hold an international conference to find ways to avert the nuclear threat.

Kazakhstan, having been the epicentre of cold-war nuclear confrontation and having resolutely resisted the temptation to turn into a nuclear power after it gained independence, has every right to raise this issue with vigour.

As for Kazakhstan, it continues to contribute to efforts to ensure global security. Fully respecting its obligations under the above-mentioned international instruments, Kazakhstan has been consistently promoting its initiatives with regard to the Conference on Interaction and Confidence-building Measures in Asia (CICA) and the establishment of a nuclear-free zone in Central Asia. We are convinced that the CICA initiative has a rational kernel, and we call on the United Nations and the Asian States to continue their support of the CICA process in the interests of Asian and global security.

We should be no less and, probably, more concerned by new threats: international terrorism, extremism, illegal trafficking in arms and drugs, and organized crime. Our newly independent State has come into direct contact with these threats. We are seriously alarmed by the situation in Central Asia and view the conflict in Afghanistan, the bandit groups' infiltrations in Uzbekistan and Kyrgyzstan, and the situation in Chechnya in Russia as links in one and the same chain. Members have heard our neighbours - Uzbekistan, Kyrgyzstan and Tajikistan - talking here about the same thing.

I want to emphasize again that the way we see it, the root of the evil is the prolonged war in Afghanistan, and we urge the Security Council to seriously address the problem in that country on a long-term basis. Without addressing it, it would be naïve to hope for the elimination of the threat to stability in our region and, thus, in the whole world. At the same time, we believe that the key to the solution of the Afghan problem is in the economic revival of Afghanistan. Our common experience points to the futility of palliative measures and attempts to bring the conflicting sides to the negotiation table without a clear economic plan. There should be a comprehensive plan for the economic rehabilitation of Afghanistan which, together with economic measures, should incorporate the fight against the production of drugs, illegal arms trade, terrorism and extremism, and should take into account the specificity of the ethnic and religious situation in Afghanistan. Of course, adequate financial resources should bolster this comprehensive approach. The price of peace and human life is worth it.

I would like now to look at the threat to the stability in our region through the prism of the Caspian Sea. The Caspian treasure-trove has turned now into the centre of attention. The interests of many States, not just of our region, converge there. The recent discovery in Kazakhstan's part of the Caspian Sea of the Kashagan oilfield, which is the largest one in the last 30 years, with forecasted reserves of 7 billion tonnes of high-quality oil, confirms once again that the potential of the Caspian Sea is enormous. It is our genuine desire and intention to see that this gift of God serves the interests of peace and prosperity.

Globalization involves a new level of interaction and interdependence of States. However, along with the obvious benefits, globalization entails the danger of a lopsided distribution of these benefits, both at the inter-State and intra-State levels.

A widening gap between developed and developing countries is a burning issue. In fact, this gap is getting bigger, and debates are underway as to the forms of involvement of both groups of countries in the processes of globalization, particularly from the point of view of the solution of the problems facing the developing countries.

The situation with regard to the future of the World Trade Organization (WTO) provides a good example of the differences in appraising the globalization phenomenon. This organization, uniting some 140 States, has become a trade and economic counterpart of the United Nations. It should be said, however, that the WTO has to be thoroughly reformed in order to really liberalize and democratize trade relations. It should not be a controlling and selectively discriminating body of world trade policy.

The Bretton Woods institutions also have to be reformed. We believe that the most important goals in reforming them are to ensure their openness and democratization, competence and adequacy and to improve cooperation with the United Nations. We share the criticism of the International Monetary Fund regarding its arm-twisting policy when loans are

conditioned on many political factors that have nothing to do with the actual economic situation.

In the context of the role of the Bretton Woods institutions in the world, I would like to mention the issue of the integration into the world economy of the economies in transition. The role and importance of this group of countries, which includes my own, in the world economy and politics will grow. I stress that it is important for Kazakhstan to continue constructive cooperation with the agencies of the United Nations family, as well as with the Bretton Woods institutions and other international organizations, in promoting economic reforms in my country.

Kazakhstan continues to give priority attention to the development of the transit transport system in the States of Central Asia and in neighbouring developing countries. We think it is important to actively pursue the improvement of existing programmes and the development of new ones designed to raise the efficiency of the present transit system in Central Asia. Our landlocked country, and the region as a whole, should have secure multiple access to the world market. This is a matter of strengthening our sovereignty and independence.

Environmental issues — particularly the management of transboundary water resources, environmental pollution and the greenhouse effect — long ago moved from the social and economic plane to the political one, and have acquired truly global significance. All countries face the problems of protecting the environment. Yet the effect on the environment experienced by developing countries and economies in transition is immeasurably much greater. Economic growth has increased the pressure on all the natural resources of our planet. The problem of lack of natural resources and their depletion creates serious economic problems and poverty. Economic development cannot stop. However, it should follow a different path. It should cease to destroy the environment so aggressively. It is because of the underestimation of environmental factors that Kazakhstan today faces such ecological disasters as those involving the Aral and Caspian Seas and the former Semipalatinsk testing ground.

There have been many cases in history of nations and States being in conflict over the lack of drinking water and water for irrigation. Thousands and thousands of people have often had to pull up their roots because of problems with water. Reducing the number of people without access to safe water is as vital today as ever. Kazakhstan calls for every country to adopt, under bilateral and multilateral treaties, legislative and administrative measures with regard to transboundary water resources and their management.

The United Nations Economic Commission for Europe and the United Nations Economic and Social Commission for Asia and the Pacific have devised a joint Special Programme for the Economies of Central Asia (SPECA), which encompasses all priority issues facing the region: development of the transit transport capacity and multiple pipeline systems; the management of energy and water resources; environmental protection; and technological growth. Such a comprehensive approach promotes better regional cooperation in Central Asia and the integration of its considerable potential into the world economy. It serves common interests. We therefore urge the international donor community to actively contribute to the SPECA programmes and to promote the economic and democratic growth of Kazakhstan and other newly independent States in Central Asia.

The three-pronged goal of global development, which I mentioned at the beginning of my statement, would be unattainable without an effective common tool. Such a took we see in the United Nations, and we are convinced that there is no alternative to our Organization. But the next century and the new, highly complex tasks we face will demand a radically renewed Organization free from the stereotypes of the past. This matter is in our hands. We should support the genuine desire of the Secretary-General to drastically revamp our Organization.

We believe that it is important to start from the head — that is, the Security Council. The debates on that subject have gone on far too long. Shall we continue to mark time, or shall we take a responsible collective decision? We stand for the expansion of the Security Council, in both categories of membership, on the basis of equitable geographic representation and respect for the sovereign equality of all United Nations Member States. Kazakhstan supports the inclusion of Germany and Japan, as well as major developing countries of Asia, Africa and Latin America, as permanent members of the Security Council, and also supports an increase in the number of non-permanent members.

We believe that the peacemaking capacity of the United Nations should also be strengthened considerably, and we support the conclusions of the report (A/55/305) by the Brahimi Panel. As for Kazakhstan, it is forming peacekeeping forces through its participation in the Central Asian battalion, composed of three States of Central Asia, and through the creation of its own Kazakhstan battalion.

There is no doubt that the financial capacity of the United Nations should be commensurate with the new tasks that the Organization is asked to perform. All Member States should meet their financial obligations under the United Nations Charter. In spite of its temporary economic difficulties, Kazakhstan is striving to do just that and is taking practical steps in that direction. As to the scale of assessments and its methodology, we have always believed, and continue to believe, that the main criterion should be a country's real capacity to pay.

We have set ambitious tasks for ourselves. Are we up to them? I am absolutely sure that we are, if we join our efforts. In fact, there is no other way. Such is the imperative of a new era, such are the aspirations of our nations.

I thank the Assembly for its attention and wish it success in its endeavour to build a safer and better world in the next century.

The President: I now give the floor to the Minister for Foreign Affairs of Chile, Her Excellency Mrs. Soledad Alvear Valenzuela.

Mrs. Valeazuela (Chile) (*spoke in Spanish*): First of all, Mr. President, permit me to congratulate you on your election to preside over the Assembly's fifty-fifth session, the first of the new millennium. I wish you every success in your presidency, and promise you Chile's full cooperation as you carry out your important duties. I would like to express our admiration and affection for the country you represent, Finland. My appreciation also goes to the praiseworthy efforts of Foreign Minister Gurirab of Namibia during the work of the session that has just come to an end. Likewise, we congratulate the Secretary-General on the leadership he has demonstrated since taking office. We recognize and value his commitment to the vision of a new United Nations for the twenty-first century. We encourage him to continue his efforts to reform the Organization.

Globalization is without a doubt the name of our era. Today it is pointless to ask ourselves whether we want to participate in globalization. Isolation is not a realistic option. Chile views globalization as an unquestionable reality and as a font of opportunity that has brought us very valuable benefits. The opening of our economy has enabled us to double the size of our gross domestic product within 10 years, compared with the almost 50 years it took to accomplish the previous doubling. Technological advances have helped to bring us closer to major world centres.

Globalization gives rise to opportunities, but it can also deepen the inequities which have always characterized the international system. The United Nations can help to ensure that globalization does not result in exclusion, with the benefits of modernization limited to a lucky few. We must make a firm commitment to developing a new form of international cooperation, focused in particular on broadening access to the knowledge-based economy.

The flows of goods, services, capital, information and technology characteristic of globalization tend to bypass domestic regulations and escape the control of Governments. This lack of regulation is generally not counterbalanced by other standards or authorities. It is up to us to fill this vacuum by using all available multilateral forums.

As never before in the history of humanity, resolving the daily problems faced by people worldwide depends on collective international decision-making. The challenge confronting the United Nations today is to lend a certain degree of order to globalization; to establish effective institutions and rules, so that globalization will serve to advance the development of our peoples; and to ensure that the fruits of scientific and technological advances benefit all peoples.

At the Rio Group's most recent Summit of Heads of State or Government, held in Cartagena, Colombia, the countries that make up this regional political coordination body prepared a joint contribution to the Millennium Summit, reaffirming the central role of the United Nations in this new era on which we are embarking.

The past year has given rise to a mixture of hope and concern with regard to peace and security. Chile followed with particular interest the historic talks held between the leaders of North and South Korea, from 13

to 15 June of this year. We congratulate the leaders and the peoples of both countries on the progress made at this groundbreaking summit.

The conflict in the Middle East has entered what seems to be a decisive stage. We are heartened by the advances made this year and encourage the parties to continue their negotiations in accordance with the established timetables and relevant Security Council resolutions. We are confident that Israel and the Palestinian National Authority will find satisfactory solutions to the remaining issues, particularly those related to Jerusalem. We are also encouraged by Israel's withdrawal from southern Lebanon.

We support the Security Council's decisions establishing a massive humanitarian programme for Iraq under the "oil-for-food" formula, and we favour an ongoing evaluation of that programme. We urge the Iraqi Government to cooperate effectively with the new inspection agency — the United Nations Monitoring, Verification and Inspection Commission — whose work we deem particularly important.

We have followed closely developments in the Balkans. The seeds of intolerance and "ethnic cleansing" are still present in the region. Chile views with fear the possibility of a new Balkan conflict. Only full respect for democracy and human rights can bring about peace in the region.

We are concerned by the conflicts in Africa. We are hopeful as to the significant mediating role played by regional entities such as the Organization for African Unity, especially in the Ethiopia-Eritrea dispute, and the Southern African Development Community. We hope that these efforts, along with those of the United Nations, can bring about peace, allowing the continent to fully develop its enormous potential.

We are pleased to note that the Security Council has directly addressed the scourge of HIV/AIDS in Africa, designating it as an international security issue requiring urgent action. We hope that initiatives will be adopted to effectively combat this problem, which casts an even greater shadow over the future of the continent than the current armed conflicts.

We view with concern the difficulties surrounding the upcoming referendum in the Western Sahara. Chile would like to see the elections take place as soon as possible, on the basis of a free and secret ballot and adequate voter information. We are concerned about the obstacles that are hindering this undertaking.

Although post-cold-war hopes for a world free of nuclear weapons in the near future have been tempered, that goal remains fully valid. I have the honour to report than on 12 July, Chile deposited its instrument of ratification for the Comprehensive Nuclear-Test-Ban Treaty — the sixteenth country to do so. We call upon all nations to ratify this Treaty as soon as possible in order to reach the quorum of 44 countries necessary for its entry into force.

In our information-based society, the problems experienced by any one country affect the world community as a whole. No state can shirk its the responsibility to promote peaceful coexistence within and among nations. From the ethical standpoint of our common humanity, we have viewed with interest the development of the concept of humanitarian intervention. Chile continues to abide by the principles of non-intervention and the self-determination of peoples. But these principles must be linked to other principles of equal or higher priority, which have emerged prominently since the end of the cold war. We cannot remain impassive in the face of the humanitarian catastrophes caused by great conflicts. Thus, we propose that in specific cases, and in accordance with the Charter of the United Nations, concerted multilateral action be taken to provide rapid assistance to those who are suffering. Chile is also an enthusiastic participant in the Human Security Network, in response to an initiative put forward by Canada and Norway.

Chile considers it an ethical and political imperative of the greatest urgency to expand its participation in the United Nations peacekeeping forces. Since 1999, we have developed an internal legal framework that is in closer harmony with international requirements for participation in these operations. Those legal modifications have enabled us to participate in the United Nations Transitional Administration in East Timor, beginning in February of this year.

My country is also willing to discuss a new payment scale for the financing of United Nations peacekeeping operations. We believe that this scale must be adjusted to reflect the current financial situation of Member States.

We cannot fail to mention the process of Security Council reform. While some progress has been noted in discussions of the Council's methods of work and of the degree of transparency required by this body, we note that there have been few, if any, advances toward the expansion of its membership.

Chile feels a certain dismay and fatigue at the lack of progress, which is the result of positions that appear irreconcilable. The issue of the veto further complicates this sensitive subject. Until we seriously address the question of limiting the veto with a view to its ultimate abolishment, we doubt that the discussions undertaken by the Assembly's Open-ended Working Group on the Question of Equitable Representation on and Increase in the Membership of the Security Council and Other Matters related to the Security Council will bear fruit.

Globalization is not limited to the economic sphere. It also involves the universalization of values and principles of our common humanity, and the strengthening of the rights of the individual, which have increasingly become subjects addressed by international law. The absence of democracy and good governance, and the people's lack of a voice and participation in public affairs in States Members of the Organization are of concern to us all. The United Nations exists for individuals, not for those who govern. Under the imperative of putting people at the centre of all our efforts, we must support and promote human rights and democratic processes.

Chile was among the countries that worked to convene the Towards a Community of Democracies conference held at Warsaw, Poland, last June. More than 100 United Nations Member nations participated in that gathering and endorsed its final declaration. We are convinced that, as time passes, the community of democracies will be an increasingly potent moral force within the United Nations, provided that it maintains its high standards and requirements.

Democracy is based on justice, both national and universal. Chile enthusiastically supports the establishment of an International Criminal Court, and hopes that all countries will ratify its statute. Establishing a permanent body to exercise criminal jurisdiction over those accused of crimes that fall within its purview will discourage the irregular domestic proceedings which have allowed such individuals to enjoy impunity, as well as limiting jurisdictional disputes among countries.

At the World Summit for Social Development, held at Copenhagen in 1995, heads of State or Government met for the first time in the history of the United Nations to declare with force and clarity that the chief responsibility of our societies is to improve the quality of life of our populations, particularly for their most marginalized and dispossessed members. This year, in a special session, the Assembly reviewed the progress made towards fulfilling the Summit's commitments and launched new initiatives on their genuine implementation. That was an important step in the quest to better humanize the process of globalization. We must continue to incorporate the objectives of the social Summit into our national and multilateral policies.

In the social sphere, the United Nations has recognized the vital need to promote gender equality. Chile has worked together with our regional neighbours in Latin America and the Caribbean to reaffirm the principles and proposals of the Fourth World Conference on Women. We have renewed our commitment to the advancement of women, and have developed a new plan to equalize opportunities for men and for women. A concrete demonstration of that commitment is the fact that about one third of President Lagos Escobar's cabinet members are women.

We reiterate Chile's strong support for preparations for the General Assembly's 2001 special session to follow up the World Summit for Children. We also attribute special significance to the concern of the United Nations for the rights and welfare of indigenous populations and of the elderly.

Chile has volunteered to host the regional preparatory meeting for the World Conference against Racism, Racial Discrimination, Xenophobia and Related Intolerance. We aim to contribute to the regional consensus in that area, confirming our very firm commitment to tolerance and respect for diversity.

Environmental protection is an issue that crosses national borders and has become a global concern, driven in part by an emerging international civil society. Here, international cooperation, under the auspices of the United Nations, continues to be an urgent necessity. The United Nations Conference on Environment and Development, held at Rio de Janeiro,

laid the foundations for agreements on climate change, forest conservation and biodiversity. It is very important that we fulfil and gradually expand those commitments with new agreements and protocols ensuring the management, protection and conservation of our planet's resources. This session, as well as the Rio + 10 event which will take place in 2002, must continue to spur commitment to a new ethic of environmental conservation.

We are witnessing the globalization of financial markets, which significantly affect capital, currency and credit flows, as well as the economies of all of nations. As recent experience demonstrates, a financial crisis in one corner of the world can rapidly trigger a domino effect, spreading the crisis even to faraway nations with no responsibility for or control over the causes of the original disturbance. It is a great injustice that countries that have been prudent and responsible in the management of their domestic economies can be affected by problems with which they had nothing to do. It is urgent for us to find ways to impose order and standards of good management on the international world. This does not mean obstructing international capital flows, but rather establishing an appropriate international framework to address the problems they may cause.

Chile has enthusiastically supported the international community's progress towards free trade through deregulation and the elimination of protectionist measures and barriers. The failure of the 1999 Seattle World Trade Organization (WTO) conference was unfortunate. But let us be frank: that failure was not brought about by civil-society demonstrations, but by the lack of agreement among the world's leading commercial Powers. Chile continues to believe in the urgent necessity of initiating a new round of multilateral trade negotiations.

The United Nations must play a key role in bringing about substantive improvements in the management of commercial, monetary and financial systems, so that their operations will take into account the needs of all countries. The Economic and Social Council has done commendable work to coordinate United Nations activities with those of the Bretton Woods institutions. But the General Assembly too has a critical role to play in this area.

The decision to hold a High-level International and Intergovernmental Event on Financing for Development in 2001 was of groundbreaking significance, and we must resolve to carry forward the commitments expressed at the Millennium Summit to ensure the success of that event. That would lead to a new phase in North-South relations, since the political legitimacy arising from a broad multilateral consensus will allow us to design a new financial architecture and a system of international trade and exchange that reflect the legitimate interests of all the world's peoples.

My country believes that official development assistance is still necessary to promote the development of many countries and regions. A globalized world cannot neglect the principle of solidarity, which is an idea so central to the United Nations tradition. In the same spirit, international assistance must be provided to relieve the distressing conditions of many countries burdened with unsustainable debt, so that they can meet the challenges of development.

This year Chile began a new six-year political term, under fully democratic conditions. Our country is in complete harmony with the international community. We possess a vibrant civil society, which made its own contributions to our preparation for the Millennium Summit. Human rights and the rule of law are respected in Chile. Our courts impart justice with rigour and a sense of responsibility. We enjoy a vigorous and open economy, and we have resolved to continue reducing inequalities in our country. We reach out to the world from a firm foundation in our own region, Latin America. We are strengthening our multilateral policies, based on open regionalism and on cooperation with countries with similar criteria throughout the world.

We are confident that this General Assembly session, dedicated to the millennium, will be recorded as the one in which we began to address the great challenge of our time: to give order to the forces of globalization and promote the extension of its benefits to an ever-increasing number of the inhabitants of our planet. You can rest assured, Mr. President, that Chile's delegation will lend its full support to meeting this challenge.

The President: I now give the floor to the Vice-Chairperson of the delegation of Finland, Ms. Marjatta Rasi.

Ms. Rasi (Finland): I will deliver this statement on behalf of Mr. Erkki Tuomioja, the Minister for Foreign Affairs of Finland.

The heads of State and Government have just completed the largest-ever United Nations gathering, the Millennium Summit. They adopted a forward-looking and ambitious Millennium Declaration. This, together with the Secretary-General's report for the Summit, sets a demanding agenda for the United Nations for the new millennium. A new spirit was kindled in the Summit. We need to keep that spirit alive in the Assembly, which now has the responsibility to start the implementation of the Millennium Declaration.

The President of Finland made a statement on the need for the United Nations to be relevant for the Member States and their people. I should like to elaborate on some of her ideas a little further, fully supporting the statement made by the French Foreign Minister, Mr. Védrine, on behalf of the European Union.

One of the most inspiring concepts that the Secretary-General has advocated is the culture of prevention. If we want the United Nations to be relevant, we must equip it with the means to be one step ahead of developments. Successful prevention requires a profound understanding of underlying causes. By understanding these causes, we can establish an early warning system that allows us to act in time, before the conflicts erupt.

One of the root causes of conflicts is poverty. As almost half of the world's population still have to make do with less than $2 dollars a day, and struggle for existence, conflicts can flare up easily. Poverty is also an affront to human dignity. Trying to halve the proportion of people living in extreme poverty requires common efforts. Democracy and respect for human rights are important preconditions for all development and for poverty eradication to be sustained. Without democratic decision-making, respect for the rule of law, human rights and fundamental freedoms, gender equality and good governance, it is unrealistic to expect sustainable results in poverty reduction.

Demand for respect for human rights will continue to shape the destiny of humankind in the future. One of the greatest achievements of the United Nations has been the codification of a core set of human rights standards. Governments have the obligation to implement these standards. The United Nations is the only global organization primarily mandated to ensure respect for human rights. It should devote more attention and resources to the full realization and enjoyment of these rights universally.

Globalization is not only an unavoidable process but also something which is on the whole beneficial for human development. Globalization today is not merely a continuation of the familiar process of internationalization of trade, market integration and growing interdependence. In these processes, we encounter the phenomenon of quantity changing into quality. The development of new technologies greatly multiplies the effects, both positive and negative, of globalization. I believe that the great majority of the world's population have benefited from globalization. Some have certainly made vast profits from it. As such, this is not to be deplored; but, at the same time, too many people are losers in the same process. Many more fear the potential threats and losses they perceive as negative effects of globalization. Still more are anxious as to whether global processes are under control any longer. For these reasons, it is of the utmost importance for us to be able to face the challenges of globalization and to counter many of its negative effects.

Mr. Sychov (Belarus), Vice-President, took the Chair.

The United Nations, the Bretton Woods institutions and the World Trade Organization (WTO), as well as other international actors, must join forces in adopting and implementing the common rules needed to harness the positive power of globalization. Trade liberalization and trade rules under the auspices of the WTO should be implemented in such a way that they benefit all, particularly the poorest, as well as safeguard our common environment.

One aspect of managing globalization is the need to enhance stability, transparency and responsible behaviour in international financial markets. We must counter disturbances caused, for example, by short-term speculative capital movements. Initiatives such as currency transaction taxes, the so-called Tobin tax, deserve careful consideration. If, as some studies indicate, such a tax is unworkable, it is all the more important to propose and adopt other means and instruments to achieve the same aims.

One of the most recent challenges is the digital divide created by the revolution in information and communication technology. Computerization and Internet literacy are not an end as such. They should serve the purposes of development: education, literacy, health care, empowerment and inclusion. By closing the digital gap, we help developing countries join the knowledge-based global economy. In the long run, the digital revolution has the greatest potential for the developing countries. Information and communication technology (ICT) will make technological leap-frogging possible for developing countries.

The global agenda set in the United Nations conferences and summits in the 1990s addressed many such basic needs of human life which need common attention in the process of globalization. Progress was made on human rights, gender equality, population, social development, sustainable development, drugs, environmental issues and many others. In the new millennium, we must focus on the accelerated implementation of the plans of action adopted at these conferences. Still, our agenda keeps growing. Children, HIV/AIDS, racism and racial discrimination, financing for development, least developed countries as well as sustainable development and the environment require more profound attention from the world community. Even with these issues, I am afraid that our agenda is not exhausted. The growing agenda poses valid demands of coherence on the United Nations system and its work, as well as on the Member States.

No matter how well we implement the global agenda and no matter how much we resort to preventive actions, we have to have improved means to solve crises and conflicts as peacefully and rapidly as possible. Finland welcomes the Secretary-General's initiative to take a critical look at the United Nations peace operations by a Panel of eminent persons. The Brahimi report suggests a comprehensive reform of peace operations. We need a detailed discussion on the report without delay. There are lessons to be learned for the United Nations and its Member States. We should particularly learn from the failures so as not to repeat them, but we also must learn from successes and see what works.

We need to address the whole continuum of peace operations from the standpoint of prevention. It is most important to try to prevent crises from erupting. Prevention is an important element during a crisis as we try to stop its escalation. Prevention continues after crises in post-conflict peace-building, as we need to minimize their consequences and their duration, not to speak of their repetition. Kosovo is a prime example of this.

I am stating the obvious when I say that the United Nations needs a rapid-reaction capability, qualified and experienced personnel to perform the operations, as well as the money to pay for them. This would make it easier to address an increased demand for United Nations peacekeeping.

The critical approach taken in the Brahimi report should also be extended to other fields and activities of the United Nations in order to attain efficiency within the Organization. Reorganization and prioritization would free both human and financial resources for the core areas of our responsibilities.

There have been positive developments in some crises that have long been on the United Nations agenda. A most encouraging example is the rapprochement in the Korean peninsula. Finland welcomes the positive development to bring peace, stability and reunification to the Korean peninsula and encourages the two parties to advance the process of dialogue. Finland also welcomes the withdrawal of Israeli troops from southern Lebanon in accordance with Security Council resolution 425 (1978). We hope this leads to a just, comprehensive and lasting peace in the Middle East.

The nation-building process in East Timor has started successfully. I hope that the present transition period will soon lead to full independence for East Timor. Recent incidents in West Timor against United Nations personnel, however, jeopardize the progress and the capabilities of the United Nations system to help. We also strongly support the Secretary-General's efforts to achieve a comprehensive settlement of the Cyprus problem.

Developments in Africa have not been encouraging. I regret deeply that the safety and security of United Nations personnel have not been guaranteed in all United Nations operations, such as that in Sierra Leone. However, Eritrea and Ethiopia have reached an agreement and international monitoring can start. I am happy to announce that Finland will participate in the United Nations mission in Ethiopia and Eritrea.

The continuum of multidimensional crises must be prevented, managed and solved with appropriate

multidimensional means. Addressing them requires cooperation among different organizations, such as the United Nations, the European Union, the Organization for Security and Cooperation in Europe, the North Atlantic Treaty Organization, the Organization of African Unity and the Organization of American States, to mention but a few. The complexity of crises has shown that no single organization is capable of dealing with all aspects of a crisis — military, civilian and humanitarian. Sad experiences, for example from the Balkans, remind us that many weaknesses still exist in the conflict-prevention and management capabilities of the international community. A clearer division of labour between the organizations is needed. They must concentrate on what they can do best, following the principle of comparative advantage. Complementarity and cooperation are the friends, and rivalry the enemy, of any operation.

Coherent action is needed to address the situations, bearing in mind the comprehensive concept of security. I stress the need to enhance our civilian crisis-management capabilities in all relevant fields. Complex crises need expertise in the fields of civilian police, the rule of law, human rights, justice, electoral assistance, institution-building, economic reconstruction and rehabilitation, as well as impartial media. As stated in the Brahimi report, doctrinal shifts and more thorough strategic planning are needed at the United Nations to address complex and often intrastate conflicts.

Peace and security are indivisible. Disarmament is a part of comprehensive and integrated action in preventing conflicts and in promoting a global dialogue on peace and stability. Arms control agreements, including the Treaty between the United States of America and the Union of Soviet Socialist Republics on the Limitation of Anti-Ballistic Missile Systems, remain a cornerstone of international security. The successful outcome of the Review Conference of the States Parties to the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons (NPT) created a new momentum in nuclear disarmament and non-proliferation. The Comprehensive Nuclear-Test-Ban Treaty must be ratified by all. We hope for a swift entry into force of the START II Treaty and we are looking forward to the commencement of the START III negotiations.

One of the main concerns is the regional arms race. We need to ensure that the few countries remaining outside the NPT regime do not develop weapons of mass destruction. Also, conventional arms, and in particular anti-personnel landmines, small arms and light weapons, remain a concern in regional and internal conflicts. The United Nations Conference on the Illicit Trade in Small Arms and Light Weapons in All Its Aspects should aim at achieving significant results in adopting a comprehensive approach integrating security and development.

Enhanced international action is also needed in humanitarian demining, particularly in post-conflict situations where civilian populations continue to be victims of anti-personnel landmines.

I wish to join the Secretary-General's call on all States to sign and ratify the Rome Statute of the International Criminal Court (ICC) at the earliest possible date. It is important now to build on what has been achieved in and after the Rome Conference and to secure the early establishment of the ICC, fully respecting the integrity of its Statute. More and more States, including my own, are approaching the stage of ratification of the Rome Statute. We are confident that, in the long run, all States will recognize the benefits of a permanent International Criminal Court.

Terrorism is an evil we must combat decisively and effectively so that everyone can live and travel freely in the world without having to fear crime and kidnappings. We have negotiated 12 major anti-terrorism conventions within the United Nations framework that make it clear that terrorist acts are criminal and can never be justified by any ends. This obviously also applies to the means used to combat terrorism.

Finland welcomes the initiative of the Secretary-General to offer an opportunity to sign any treaty or convention of which the Secretary-General is the depositary. In this connection, I should also like to make reference to the Tampere Convention on the Provision of Telecommunication Resources for Disaster Mitigation and Relief Operations. As the host country of the relevant conference, Finland would like to encourage all States to sign and ratify the Convention in order to bring it into force as soon as possible.

The purposes enshrined in the Charter and the new challenges the United Nations is facing require unwavering support for the United Nations and for multilateralism from its Member States. The United Nations is an expression of the will of its Member

States to deliberate and act multilaterally. There are many reasons why multilateralism is the preferred, as well as perhaps the only sustainable, way to deal with problems. It involves all the actors that are needed for the long-term solution of conflicts. It provides the transparency that modern conflict resolution requires. It strengthens respect for international law in general. Last but not least, it diminishes the possibility that force will be used unnecessarily or disproportionately.

A tendency towards unilateralism would only reopen old divisions or create new ones. The United Nations is a stronghold of multilateralism, and it should be used to safeguard the primacy of multilateral action. In this respect, we must ensure that the United Nations is able to act effectively when the need arises. The role and ability of the Secretary-General must be enhanced to enable the Organization to act when it is otherwise threatened with paralysis.

In this context, I want to make it clear that the crisis management capacity under construction in the European Union will be at the service of the international community. It is not intended for unilateral interventionism. The Union will contribute to international peace and security in accordance with the principles of the United Nations Charter and the principles and objectives of the Organization for Security and Cooperation in Europe Charter on European Security.

For this kind of a multilateralism to work, United Nations finances must be put on a sound, sustainable and equitable basis. This is crucial for its strength and credibility. Charter obligations related to the payment of contributions must be fulfilled by all, on time, in full and without conditions.

Cooperation between the United Nations, Governments and non-governmental organizations has been very successful, and it must be intensified and facilitated. It has to be extended to cover the whole of civil society. Present challenges are too heavy for the United Nations to carry alone. I commend the Secretary-General for his several initiatives in this respect. In particular, I would mention his Global Compact initiative, which seeks to engage corporations in the promotion of equitable labour standards, respect for human rights and the protection of the environment. Cooperation with civil society is a necessity for the new millennium. Strong partnerships are needed to meet the challenges posed every day in the present world. This trend should be strengthened and encouraged.

The Acting President: I give the floor to His Excellency Mr. Roberto Flores Bermúdez, Minister for Foreign Affairs of Honduras.

Mr. Flores Bermúdez (Honduras) (*spoke in Spanish*): It is an honour for me to address the General Assembly, which will complement the recent Millennium Summit by providing a fundamental contribution to the current stage of transition towards a United Nations in tune with reality.

International peace and security, along with cooperation and solidarity for sustainable human development, must become the fundamental instruments of our new Organization in the new millennium. Peace and security require a renewed commitment to international law, full respect for and faithful, prompt compliance with the decisions of the International Court of Justice, national compliance with the standards imposed by treaties and good faith in the application of laws, uncompromised by domestic political agendas.

Honduras, a founding Member of the United Nations, considers that the decisions of the International Court of Justice are a solid basis for the resolution of international conflicts and that they represent the fundamental norms for coexistence among States, with the support of the Security Council as the guarantor of their implementation.

Peace and security among nations require the delimitation of land and maritime areas, in keeping with the rules of international law. They require respect for historical rights and the non-use of force. Only with defined boundaries can we determine clearly what contribution everyone can make to our common causes and promote the development of borders of solidarity on the basis of a culture of peace.

The 1,000 years that now lie behind us produced extraordinary advances in the history of humanity. But they also left us tasks to be completed relating to problems such as racism, xenophobia, an arsenal of weapons of various magnitudes and the effects of a culture of violence and destruction. This is why we firmly support the consolidation of the peace process in the Middle East. We welcome the constructive dialogue launched by the two Koreas in an effort to normalize

their relations, as we welcome peaceful solutions for any divided society.

As regards globalization, we must tackle not only the economic aspect, but also social well-being. Education is a passport to the future, but only if the education provided is the same for all, and not just for a minority, and only if education is life-affirming and promotes change so as to teach all human beings on the earth to live together.

For this purpose, as the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization has pointed out, we must learn to know, we must learn to do, we must learn to be. In this area, we believe that the Economic and Social Council of our Organization must promote and pursue its initiative for greater dissemination of technological information, as proposed by its members during the high-level segment this year. It must try to prevent disparities in technological development that benefit only industrialized countries.

Millions of human beings are noting with amazement that there exist realities very different from their own harsh conditions. When they try to travel to that fantastic world, to that dream of hope, they find out that borders do exist and that they are free only to continue dreaming.

Globalization is a coin with two faces. On the one hand, it creates wealth, benefits, possibilities, but on the other, poverty, problems, inequity and even new forms of exclusion. Instead, globalization should create for the benefit of all a world without any exclusions. Our responsibility is to bring about the globalization of the development of the human being.

Honduras is participating in the Central American integration process. We see this as a way of having a greater presence and being more active in this globalized world. This is why we actively support the strengthening of the institutional process of Central American integration.

Despite the advances that occurred in the past millennium, the terms of trade continue to work against the development of many of our countries. The increase in oil prices has a devastating effect on the weakest economies, and, paradoxically, the more we increase production, the more we open our doors to international trade and eliminate barriers, the more obstacles we encounter to gaining access to international markets. This creates a crisis for our export capacity. Trade globalization must produce benefits in both directions.

In addition to the asymmetries and disparities to which I have referred, there are also threats of different types that no State, however powerful or strong, can successfully confront in isolation. The report of the Secretary-General to the Millennium Summit attached as much importance to the topic of the environment as it did to peace and development. This demonstrates that in the year 2000 we recognize that, in addition to achieving peace and economic development, we must take care of our environment. If we do not, the future of humanity will continue to be threatened. Every day we are increasingly threatened by the lack of drinking water, desertification, the destruction of the ozone layer and climate change. These processes have produced an increase in natural disasters. Honduras, my country, was the victim of a disaster of catastrophic proportions. This is why we attach such priority to caring for the environment and to education on how to promote and preserve it.

The need to control the production of greenhouse gases, the widening of the hole in the ozone layer, the drop in oxygen production, the pollution of fresh and salt water, the extinction of thousands of species — all these form part of that greater concern that we must confront jointly.

Similarly, terrorism, organized crime and drug trafficking can be combated effectively only if we act jointly and in coordination. If we do not, we will be jointly responsible as accomplices in the destruction of the hopes of the future —youth and children.

Our Organization should make a greater effort to overcome the disparity between abundance and want, of which very concrete examples abound. For instance, today hundreds of thousands of medicines are produced, but the millions of human beings affected by HIV/AIDS need access to these medicines if their pain is to be relieved. It is truly horrifying that the world produces thousands of metric tons more food than is needed to feed its population, and yet people are dying of hunger and malnutrition. The poverty and hunger of millions of human beings is an insult to humanity and an affront to the dignity of individuals. Here there is room for improved coordination.

Our Organization continues its important efforts to prevent world conflicts. There have been many

achievements in implementing machinery for world order and peace, including peacekeeping activities and the work of the international tribunals. We have also seen progress in disarmament, particularly in terms of weapons of mass destruction. Aware of its international responsibilities, Honduras, to the extent that its resources permit, has also contributed to international peace and security, participating in the missions in Haiti and Western Sahara.

The United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) has also acted as a partner in the development process in many countries around the world. It has worked with national Governments, with society and local communities. UNDP is a trustworthy, active partner in the elaboration and implementation of medium- and long-term national strategies to contribute to the reduction of poverty. The Executive Board meeting of UNDP, held yesterday, was very successful in advancing UNDP reform. Honduras is actively participating in this process.

The world of bipolar confrontation is no longer, and the era of cooperation is under way. Nevertheless, our Organization is still leaving out States that have contributed to development, that represent millions of beings and that participate actively in the world economy. For these and other reasons, which we have often cited in this General Assembly and in other international forums, these States should be participating in our debates and decisions. One such State is the Republic of China.

At the dawning of the new millennium we must strengthen our membership, expand our representation of peoples and nations and ensure fairer and more balanced representation in the discussions and decisions of the Security Council. To this end, Honduras believes that the Security Council should make room for important development partners and representatives of the developing world, on the basis of equitable geographical representation and with the consensus of the existing regional groups.

We also believe that the right to exercise the veto presently enjoyed by a limited number of States should be confined to specific topics and circumstances, so that it is not used merely to protect vested interests.

The new vision we have of a renewed United Nations requires that our Organization become more competent, more agile and more responsible; that it be better administered, with a healthy financial system; and that it produce more tangible results for the peoples of the world. This is why we support the results of the Working Group of the General Assembly and believe that reforming and expanding the Council must be based on the broadest possible consensus and be in keeping with fair and equitable geographical representation, by which developing countries will be able to make substantial contributions to the decision-making process so as to solidify world peace and security.

Our Organization must engage in self-criticism and be the first to propose changes to its working methods. Thematic dialogues designed to produce consensus and plans of action should replace the long, costly world conferences, the concrete results of which are not always easy to see. These lofty conferences should be replaced by a genuine debate in the General Assembly, and the procedures should be simplified so as to save the Organization the large sums that we are presently wasting because of duplication of efforts.

I conclude by referring to the Millennium Summit held just last week. I would like to recall the idea of the President of the Republic of Honduras, Mr. Carlos Flores, that the United Nations can and must work to bring about the required coexistence of the poor and the rich, the large and the small, by means of a platform of sovereign equality and human solidarity.

And our President said,

> "More than a world pained by poverty and inequity for the overwhelming majority, the world should be the sum of its peoples with at least their basic needs and essential requirements met." (*A/55/PV.3*)

The President: I now call on the Minister for Foreign Affairs, Culture, Youth and Sport of Liechtenstein, Her Excellency Ms. Andrea Willi.

Ms. Willi (Liechtenstein): Allow me to begin my remarks by congratulating you, Mr. President, on your election to the presidency of the fifty-fifth session of the General Assembly. I wish you much success in guiding the Assembly to a fruitful outcome and I pledge to you the full support of the Liechtenstein delegation. I would also like to congratulate the newest Member, Tuvalu, on its admission to the United Nations and in particular, to welcome Tuvalu into the group of small countries.

I have had the honour of participating in the general debate before, but this year is very special. It marks the tenth anniversary of Liechtenstein's membership in the United Nations. I would therefore like to include in my remarks some of the issues to which Liechtenstein attaches particular importance in its United Nations engagement. For Liechtenstein, as for many other countries, the United Nations stands for the protection of human rights and human dignity and for the promotion of common values.

The United Nations has been particularly challenged during the last 12 months in playing its rightful role in the pursuit of peace and security. Although remarkable efforts have been made, some conflict situations still do not allow for effective peacekeeping to take place. When the Secretary-General called last year for a culture of prevention, my delegation fully supported his ideas and we still believe that the prevention of conflicts must be the key concept in the maintenance of peace. We all know that preventing conflicts can save hundreds of thousands of lives. Political energy and enormous financial resources can be used for other purposes. The term "culture of prevention" entails a comprehensive approach to different kinds of problems. However, preventive approaches can be perceived as a threat to the sovereignty of a State. The classic notion of the term obviously no longer enables us to cope with the changed realities of the world. The sovereignty of States remains a cornerstone of the United Nations. Creating a culture of prevention is therefore a process that requires a concerted effort by the United Nations membership as a whole. Addressing the root causes of so many of today's internal conflicts will constitute a further step in meeting this humanitarian, political and economic necessity. Liechtenstein has for several years promoted ideas and suggestions on a preventive approach with regard to problems arising from the application of the right of self-determination. It is time to free ourselves of biased and obsolete thinking and to recognize that the effective application and exercise of the right of self-determination is the basis for preventing internal conflicts and the violent disintegration of States.

The adoption of the Rome Statute of the International Criminal Court (ICC) in 1998 was an historic step. The conclusion of the work on the elements of crimes and the rules of procedure by the Preparatory Commission this summer was a further step forward, and the ratification process is promising. We hope to be able to contribute to the entry into force of the Statute soon. It is of crucial importance that the integrity of the Rome Statute be maintained throughout the remaining work to be done by the Preparatory Commission. The qualities of the ICC have often been praised. The ICC's potential for prevention is certainly one of its outstanding characteristics. An effective criminal court will make an important contribution to terminating the practice of impunity which has prevailed for so long without being seriously challenged.

Liechtenstein has always supported enhanced United Nations cooperation with regional organizations, inter alia, the Organization for Security and Cooperation in Europe (OSCE) as well as the Council of Europe, in particular in the areas of human rights, conflict prevention and post-conflict rehabilitation.

The promotion and protection of human rights can also contribute to the prevention of conflicts. This is more than a legitimate concern for all of us — it is our duty. Ever since Liechtenstein became a Member of the United Nations 10 years ago, this issue has been a top priority. In recent years, human rights have become more important in foreign policy and in the world economy. There is increased awareness that human rights issues cannot be considered in an isolated manner, since there is a clear connection between human rights and economic prosperity, social welfare, and peace and security.

The full enjoyment of human rights and fundamental freedoms by women must be the basis for full equality in a stable society and we must continue to take further action in order to achieve the full advancement and empowerment of women. Together with 12 women Foreign Ministers, I last night signed a letter addressed to the Secretary-General in which we noted the special needs of women in HIV/AIDS prevention, care and treatment, and called upon the United Nations membership to take into account the need for an enhanced availability of education, testing, counselling, care and treatment designed to address the specific needs of women and girls.

Liechtenstein fully supports the fight against transnational organized crime, in particular trafficking in persons, and offences against children as well as the fight against money laundering. Financial crime is

increasingly a key concern in today's open and global financial world, which is characterized by the high mobility of funds and the rapid development of new payment tools. In our view, international cooperation in the global fight against money laundering can only be enhanced if all international financial services centres work towards full implementation of internationally agreed standards, and my Government therefore fully supports the objectives of the United Nations Global Programme against Money Laundering (GPML) Forum. The approach must, however, be transparent, inclusive and non-discriminatory, and the positive action already taken or being taken by individual countries must be properly recognized. Any punitive approach, including the establishment of lists and the imposition of sanctions on individual jurisdictions, as well as the failure to distinguish between the fight against money laundering and tax issues, runs counter to the spirit of international cooperation. We therefore regret, in particular, recent proceedings by some international and regional bodies directed against certain financial centres, including Liechtenstein. The lack of transparency and the manner in which this was done are not in conformity with the established principles and procedures of international cooperation.

These established principles and procedures must guide the cooperation between States and the resolution of difficulties they may have. International cooperation must be handled in the same way when large States are dealing with small States and when small States are dealing with large States. No organization should be allowed to depart from established practice in international relations. Cooperation by small States must never be interpreted as capitulation; cooperation implies consideration of the rights and interests of all.

The President: I now call on Her Excellency Ms. Nadezhda Mihailova, Minister for Foreign Affairs of Bulgaria.

Ms. Mihailova (Bulgaria): First of all, on behalf of the Bulgarian delegation, I take this opportunity to congratulate you, Mr. President, and the other members of the presidency on assuming the particularly important task of presiding over this important millennium session of the General Assembly and to wish you every success in guiding it to a successful conclusion.

Let me start by saying that the Republic of Bulgaria, as an associated country, aligns itself with the statement delivered on behalf of the European Union.

This past year has been marked by a series of events, culminating in the Millennium Summit. From this General Assembly session we expect consensus decisions aimed at a strengthened and more efficient United Nations, capable of bringing us closer to a common vision for a better future, rid of the scourge of conflict and war, poverty and disease, backwardness and under-development, and based on peace and security, sustainable development and prosperity in the context of a dominating tendency towards a more globalized and interdependent world. This truly is a formidable task. It cannot be achieved by or for a separate country or region. It requires a broad and sustained effort to create a shared future, based upon our common humanity in all its diversity, as rightly pointed out in the Millennium Declaration.

On the verge of the new millennium, it would not be an exaggeration to say that humanity has achieved a lot. Nowadays we have at our disposal far better and efficient means to produce more goods and services, to fight diseases and live longer and better lives, to reap the benefits of the new information technologies in all spheres of life. But at the same time, we cannot but recognize that humanity is still confronted by tremendous challenges. Poverty and misery are still dominant over large parts of the world. People in so many places are still exposed to conflict and violence. The world is still threatened by weapons of mass destruction. New threats, such as terrorism, international crime, illicit traffic in narcotics and small arms, are coming to the fore. Also of particular concern are the changes in the world climate and environment, which are bringing disasters capable of destroying the homes and livelihoods of millions.

To cope with these challenges we must act together. This is the reason why we need a strengthened and effective United Nations, which could be achieved through the shared responsibility and the good political will of all its Member States. The Millennium Assembly is giving us the opportunity to reaffirm our commitment to the purposes and the founding principles of the United Nations, to go ahead with reforms and to strengthen its role and effectiveness, so as to make it serve us all better in meeting the challenges we are confronted with at the beginning of the new millennium.

Bulgaria joins the other Member States in supporting the proposals, contained in the Millennium Report of the Secretary-General Kofi Annan (A/54/2000) and aimed at the system-wide streamlining and strengthening of the Organization and at making it more efficient and responsive to new realities. Of particular importance in this regard is the strengthening and revitalization of the principal organs of the United Nations, in particular the General Assembly, the Security Council and the Economic and Social Council.

Regarding the reform and the enlargement of the Security Council, we share the view that this process should result in a more representative, effective and legitimate Security Council, taking into consideration both the increased number of the United Nations membership and the enhanced role and political and economic potential of certain States, like Germany and Japan, for example, which could assume the responsibilities of permanent members. In our view, a reformed Council should be more transparent, open and accessible to the interested non-member States. A fair and balanced representation, including the Group of Eastern European States, whose membership has doubled in the last decade, should definitely be secured. A decision on the enlargement of the Council and on its working methods should be supported by the broadest possible consensus, including all the permanent members of the Security Council.

During the past year, the international community continued to be engaged closely with the situation in south-east Europe. As a country, suffering most directly the impact of the developments in the region, Bulgaria is particularly concerned with the situation in Kosovo. We note that progress in implementing resolution 1244 (1999) of the Security Council has been achieved, particularly with regard to restoring peace and stability in the province. At the same time, it must be recognized that in terms of multi-ethnic coexistence the situation is still far from satisfying. Continuing ethnic violence is causing serious concern. Particularly worrying are the attacks against members of the international peacekeeping contingents and United Nations personnel. The situation requires resolute steps on behalf of all community leaders in Kosovo to reject violence and to promote tolerance and cooperation in compliance with the adopted declarations. We see such an approach as a key prerequisite for building up an atmosphere of confidence and ethnic tolerance.

The successful preparation and holding of municipal elections with the participation of all ethnic minorities, including refugees and displaced persons, is particularly important for speeding up the political process in Kosovo and for securing lasting peace and stability.

Since the very beginning of the Kosovo crisis, Bulgaria has been actively engaged in the overall efforts of the international community to settle the conflict and ensure lasting peace and stability in the region. As is well known, Bulgaria participates in the international peacekeeping forces in Kosovo and renders logistical support to the peacekeeping Mission in the province. Furthermore, my country has been mobilizing significant resources, in accordance with our potential, to increase its contribution to international peace activities.

In response to the appeal to increase the size of the United Nations civilian police force in Kosovo, Bulgaria has increased its contingent to 60 police officers, and is now considering the possibility of increasing that number to 100. Bulgaria has sent an engineering platoon to join the international presence in the field. Bulgarian companies are engaged in the construction and assembling of houses to shelter displaced persons and refugees in Kosovo. Last, but not least, Bulgaria has been supplying low-cost electricity to Kosovo. The overall cost of these endeavours has so far reached $6 million.

We deem particularly important the involvement of all the countries of the region in the process of seeking settlement of the outstanding issues through the process of multilateral and bilateral negotiations. In this context, the informal meetings held at the level of prime ministers and the meetings of the foreign and defence ministers of the countries neighbouring the Federal Republic of Yugoslavia that are devoted to different aspects of cooperation are useful.

Of particular importance to the post-conflict reconstruction of conflict-stricken areas is the elaboration and the implementation of a long-term strategy for the economic reconstruction and development of the countries of the region through their integration into the European and Euro-Atlantic structures. The speedy implementation of the different projects within the framework of the Stability Pact for South-Eastern Europe could contribute significantly to the economic development and stability of the region.

We deem infrastructure projects as being particularly important in that regard. Such projects will contribute to enhancing the transportation and communications links of the region and connecting them with the rest of Europe. Attracting investments and developing trade and the participation of companies from the region in the reconstruction process are important as well.

We highly appreciate the progress achieved in strengthening cooperation between the countries of the region in such fields as fighting organized crime and corruption, the illicit traffic in narcotics, curbing the uncontrolled possession of small arms, and so on. An important achievement of that cooperation is the creation of a multinational peace force in south-eastern Europe, with joint headquarters in Plovdiv, Bulgaria. We are confident that the establishment of this force will strengthen the spirit of confidence and cooperation in the region of south-eastern Europe.

An issue of special relevance to Bulgaria and also, I believe, for other countries of the region, is the negative impact on the national economy of the strict implementation of the economic sanctions imposed until recently by the Security Council on the Federal Republic of Yugoslavia. As is well known, Bulgaria strictly abided by the decisions of the United Nations Security Council, and as a result suffered economic losses commensurate with the country's foreign debt. Those losses still affect our economic development. Given the continued relevance and importance of this issue under the present international setting, Bulgaria supports the view that, since the provisions of the Charter have equal importance, the issue of assisting third States affected by sanctions has to be taken into consideration together with the imposition of sanctions.

The elaboration of a concrete mechanism for that purpose is therefore important for the United Nations, which must find ways and means of alleviating their negative effects, in particular on third States. The international community as a whole should take care of this. In our view, it is necessary that there be closer and more direct participation in the whole process by all third States that could potentially be adversely affected by the imposition of sanctions. We are confident that the discussions on this issue at the present session, based on the decisions already adopted and on the report of the Secretary-General under resolution 54/107, will result in more concrete decisions to that end.

Bulgaria not only supports international efforts to overcome the crisis in south-eastern Europe, but it also fully supports the efforts aimed at resolving conflict situations in Cyprus, the Middle East, the Caucuses, Africa and elsewhere in the world. Bulgaria notes with satisfaction the positive progress in the relations between South and North Korea.

In the context of the new challenges in the field of international peace and security, United Nations peacekeeping operations continue to be a crucial element in the activities of the United Nations. My country supports the efforts of the international community aimed at ensuring the necessary tools and resources required to promote conflict prevention, the peaceful resolution of disputes, and post-conflict peace-building and reconstruction. We are convinced that the new generation of peacekeeping operations should include in their mandates a proportionate combination of political, military, humanitarian, reconstruction and other relevant activities.

In this regard, we believe that there are still unexploited opportunities to strengthen the cooperation of the United Nations and to make its cooperation with regional organizations in the field of preventive diplomacy, crisis management and peacekeeping more effective on the basis of on their competitive advantages. We share the concern of other Member States over ensuring the United Nations ability to deliver on its mounting array of peacekeeping commitments, and we are committed to work together to strengthen the capacity of the United Nations in this vital area.

We fully support the need to reform the United Nations peacekeeping scale of assessments. I would like to point out, as a clear demonstration of this fact, that the Government of Bulgaria has decided to assume an additional financial commitment by increasing its contribution to peacekeeping operations.

An issue closely linked to the maintenance of international peace and security is the fight against terrorism and international crime. Bulgaria attaches paramount importance to the efforts of the world community in the fight against terrorism. We condemn all terrorist acts and lament the loss of life and the destruction inflicted by such acts. We share the view that the threat of terrorism is assuming a magnitude that requires a decisive and joint response by the whole international community. Bulgaria supports the

activities of the United Nations aimed at setting norms and standards for the fight against terrorism and international crime through the negotiation of various legal instruments and by creating appropriate institutions for that purpose.

We consider that the establishment of the International Criminal Court is a significant achievement in that regard. I would like to reiterate my country's strong commitment to the fight against the most serious kinds of international crime in all their forms. That commitment is a consistent part of Bulgarian policy. We are confident that the establishment of the International Criminal Court will be an efficient step by the international community towards deterring the potential perpetrators from committing such acts.

Together with peacemaking and the building of a more secure world, the broadening of the human aspect of development through democracy and participation has been widely accepted and has become one of the priorities of the activities of the United Nations. The principle of the indivisibility of the universally recognized civil, political, economic, social and cultural rights continues to be a key element of today's system of promotion and protection of human rights and freedoms. Bulgaria is confident that the activities of international forums in the field of human rights should be aimed at ensuring the effective and universal enjoyment of those rights on a global scale.

The principle of the indivisibility of universally recognized civil, political, economic, social and cultural rights continues to be a key element in today's system of promotion and protection of human rights and freedoms. Bulgaria is convinced that the activities of international forums in the field of human rights should be aimed at ensuring the effective and universal enjoyment of those rights on a global scale. In this respect, the monitoring and effective control of the implementation of human rights and fundamental freedoms remain of crucial importance. Guided by this understanding, Bulgaria is now party to all universal human rights instruments that have established specific monitoring bodies and has recognized their competence to consider communications from individuals.

In our view, the relevant experiences of some regional organizations with competence in the human rights field also could be taken into consideration. We share the view that a more effective coordination and exchange of information and even joint efforts are needed between the United Nations and regional organizations such as the Council of Europe and the Organization for Security and Cooperation in Europe (OSCE).

A better implementation of international standards could be achieved by improving existing mechanisms and by constructive and open dialogue on the most sensitive issues, including those related to human rights in individual States. Accordingly, the Bulgarian Government attaches great importance to the enjoyment of all human rights by Bulgarians living abroad and considers respect for their rights as an essential element in the enhancement of relations.

Enhanced socio-economic development is another important factor for securing stability and peace in the world. The achievements registered in this field should be recognized and encouraged. The review process, based on the relevant ideas contained in the millennium report of the Secretary-General, must result in the strengthening of the coordinating role of the Economic and Social Council and of the entire machinery of this Organization. Of particular relevance in this regard are the steps aimed at the practical realization of the follow-up measures to the major international conferences.

Bulgaria attaches major importance to the role of the United Nations in the field of sustainable development and is following closely the United Nations dialogue and the activities of the respective United Nations bodies and agencies on issues related to demographics, social development, women, the fight against diseases and drugs, and so on.

Bulgaria is cooperating actively with the United Nations system of specialized agencies and programmes. We are interested in further developing this cooperation. We are looking forward to more dynamic and streamlined activities, especially through the use of the potential of United Nations Development Programme for capacity-building and assistance in the development and implementation of joint projects. In this regard, the system of resident coordinators and the efforts to make that system more operational will undoubtedly play an important role.

Bulgaria shares the concern of the international community regarding the spread of diseases, in particular the AIDS virus. We support the activities of the United Nations in this field, and we join our efforts

to those of Governments, non-governmental organizations, and academic and research institutions in the fight against this dangerous disease.

Development and economic growth are impossible without full participation in global economic and financial exchanges. In our opinion, the United Nations and its institutions could play a more active role with regard to the specific problems related to economic transition and reforms.

Disarmament issues continue to play an important role in overall efforts to secure a better world for future generations. The Bulgarian Government attaches high priority to international efforts to strengthen the nuclear non-proliferation regime. We call for an early entry into force of the Comprehensive Nuclear-Test-Ban Treaty as an important step in that direction and support the decision of the Conference on Disarmament to establish an ad hoc committee to conduct negotiations on a fissile material cut-off treaty.

We favour the strengthening of the Biological and Toxin Weapons Convention and believe that a further acceleration of the negotiations and an early conclusion of the protocol to the Convention is required.

As a State party to the Chemical Weapons Convention, Bulgaria would like to contribute to increasing the number of accessions to the Convention in order to achieve recognition of the prohibition of chemical weapons as a universal norm of international law. As a concrete effort to this end, we are hosting a regional seminar of the Organization for the Prohibition of Chemical Weapons in Sofia from 28 to 30 September of this year.

With regard to conventional arms, anti-personnel landmines are widely recognized as a terrible weapon, which kills and maims hundreds of thousands of people worldwide. Convinced of the need for a total prohibition of anti-personnel mines, on 29 July 1999 the Bulgarian Parliament ratified the Ottawa Convention, thus contributing to its early entry into force.

We are also ready to contribute to the efforts of the international community to reduce conventional weapons, including small arms, especially their excessive and destabilizing accumulation in areas of conflict. We regard universal participation in the United Nations Register of Conventional Arms as an important step towards effective transparency, on both a regional and a global scale.

For Bulgaria this past year has been a period of continued intensive efforts by the Government to build on the economic stabilization that has been achieved and to move forward with structural reforms, modernizing State administration, enforcing the rule of law in civil society and creating favourable conditions for sustainable economic growth. The steps and initiatives that have been undertaken in compliance with the Government programme "Bulgaria — 2001" are directed at moving ahead with the integration of Bulgaria into European and Euro-Atlantic structures.

Being an integral part of Europe, Bulgaria regards accelerated accession to the European Union and full membership in North Atlantic Treaty Organization (NATO) as an expression of our sovereign political choice based on broad public support. Since Bulgaria is endeavouring to promote and enhance the values of democracy, we are sincerely interested in seeing these values become widely accepted throughout South-eastern Europe. The Republic of Bulgaria welcomes its inclusion in the process of enlargement of the European Union, together with other associated countries from Central and Eastern Europe, as well as Cyprus. The Bulgarian Government is fully aware that our accession endeavours are contingent on the success of domestic economic and legislative reforms.

The Bulgarian Government has developed a clear-cut national strategy to meet the criteria for NATO membership, based on a comprehensive national programme of preparation, which is being updated and optimized. Bulgaria has the political will and is undertaking concrete steps to translate and fulfil in regional terms the objectives of the Euro-Atlantic Partnership Council and the enhanced Partnership for Peace. Our positive attitude is reflected in the ongoing regional political dialogue and the practical follow-up measures to enhance regional security and defence cooperation in South-eastern Europe.

In conclusion, I would like once again to declare my country's readiness to cooperate actively with all Member States for the successful implementation of the lofty goals which we have before us at the present session of the General Assembly. We are confident that discussions on important agenda items will be translated into practical measures.

The President: I give the floor to the Minister of Foreign Affairs of Colombia, His Excellency Mr. Guillermo Fernández de Soto.

Mr. Fernández de Soto (Colombia) (*spoke in Spanish*): Allow me to congratulate you, Sir, on your election as President of the General Assembly at the current session. I am confident that under your able guidance our deliberations will yield success. I also wish to thank your predecessor for his leadership and for the his exemplary work as President of the Assembly during the fifty-fourth session. I also have the honour to extend convey my greetings to the Secretary-General and to acknowledge his firm leadership and his continuing interest in the search for practical and innovative solutions.

For Colombia, this session represents a historic challenge: the challenge to forge new relationships aimed at carrying out the mission agreed upon by heads of State or Government at the Millennium Summit. They have defined the parameters of the world in which we wish to live and the conditions for creating a new international political and economic order. My country had the honour to submit the Cartagena de Indias Declaration (A/54/929), a commitment adopted by heads of State of the Rio Group, which enunciates the aspirations of our region and is an exceptional contribution to the future of the United Nations. We will now undertake a careful follow-up of these initiatives so as to translate them into realities for the benefit of humankind.

Perhaps the dawn of the new millennium will enable us to face this challenge with optimism, to signal a break with the legacy of half a century and with the many proposals that have so often met with indifference. It represents an opportunity to translate our collective aspirations into tangible reality.

In large part, our expectations relate to the meaning and scope of globalization. Sweeping revolutions are taking place in the fields of transportation, communication and the electronic media. Every day we are astonished by advances in technology and by the discoveries of applied science. The main purpose of the United Nations and of its various forums and agencies is to channel this enormous store of technological and scientific knowledge towards the poorest and most vulnerable sectors of the population.

Information technology is bringing structural change to the international economy and unprecedented opportunities to promote creative cultural interaction among peoples. But the information revolution can also become a source of exclusion. We face the risk of creating a new form of illiteracy: cyber-illiteracy. We must bridge the digital divide and convert information technology into a positive factor for education and poverty-reduction so that the information revolution may become truly global. Failure to do so will increase the gap between rich and poor.

One of our principal challenges is therefore to globalize globalization and to make it an imperative for the twenty-first century. It is, in other words, to bring the benefits of this process to more regions, nations and individuals by democratizing access to new technologies, eliminating barriers to trade and investment and recognizing that the resources with which nature provides us are the common heritage of future generations.

Here, preservation of the environment is a key element. We have an obligation to respect nature and to build a sustainable future. We must put an end to the destruction being caused by the irrational use of natural resources and by unsound patterns of consumption and production. This requires greater political commitment to control climate change, eliminate sources of water pollution and put an end to the loss of our forests. The provision of financial resources and transfer of environmentally safe technologies are issues still to be resolved. The international community must honour the commitments it has assumed in this field before it is too late.

For their part, the United Nations and the multilateral financial institutions must develop a new framework to prevent and respond to risks and economic crises. We need a stable, ordered, transparent and predictable financial system, one in which we can strengthen our early warning capacity, effectively control the volatility of capital flows and ensure sufficient liquidity to provide timely support to countries affected by crisis. Another urgent priority is to create social protection networks that can be used in times of financial crisis.

The beginning of the millennium is marked also by new concerns and threats to peace and security. The proliferation and illicit trade in small arms is one of these. The illegal traffic in such arms has reached

unacceptable proportions; its impact has been even more devastating than that of weapons of mass destruction. Despite this, the international community is not giving it the importance and priority which this grave problem demands. Urgent and effective measures are needed to halt and completely eliminate this illegal trade.

Countries affected by this phenomenon must not remain exposed to the criminal activities of the networks of arms traffickers who, taking advantage of the absence of monitoring and oversight mechanisms, are causing irreparable damage to our societies. Governments have the political and moral responsibility to act decisively against illicit arms exports and to bring all the force of the law to bear against the merchants of death and violence who profit from this nefarious trade. My country, Colombia, has paid a very high price in human lives as a consequence of this criminal activity.

Countries that are exporters of small arms must establish controls on intermediaries and refrain from authorizing sales if there is a risk of improper use. There is a need for greater transparency and for the exchange of information on the modalities and routes of this trade. We must urgently create mechanisms to provide financial and technical assistance so that affected countries will be better able to implement effective controls. We have a responsibility to ensure that the United Nations Conference on the Illicit Trade in Small Arms and Light Weapons in all its Aspects, to be held in 2001, results in concrete commitments and effective action.

The global problem of illicit drugs, for its part, continues to be one of the most serious threats of our time. It is a factor for violence and corruption, economic disruption and impoverishment, erosion of the social fabric and instability in democracies. It is also a cause of alarming environmental disasters.

No nation has suffered as tragically as Colombia from the consequences of this global problem. Every day, lives are lost in Colombia through the action of outlaw groups whose activities are financed from resources obtained from the traffic in drugs. Now, when all our efforts are focused on the difficult battle against this problem, we need increased support and the effective solidarity of the international community.

Only by accepting and fully implementing the principle of shared responsibility will humankind be able to free itself from the scourge of illicit drugs. We ask for no more. Let us all assume the cost that is our share to bear in order to wipe this illegal activity from the face of the earth.

Colombia is making extraordinary efforts to advance towards a solution to its internal conflict. It is a fundamental objective that we will never renounce. We are aware that the building of peace takes time, but we are making steady progress. In the midst of the complexities of our situation in Colombia, and despite the cruelty of the present conflict, we have made progress in confidence-building, in the dialogue, in the discussion of the thematic agendas and in the participation of civil society. We know full well that the achievement of peace requires in-depth action in the economic and social fields that could give real and lasting content to these efforts.

A number of countries have joined in this process, at the request of the Government. Today, peace in Colombia is important for the world. I appeal to the international community to reaffirm its solidarity and offer its material support to our peace process.

One of the most important developments of the last two decades has been the increasing commitment to respect for human rights. We have made some progress in defining economic and social rights as an indivisible component of so-called traditional rights or individual freedoms. The old objections that prevented us from proclaiming the universal validity and application of human rights are gradually losing way and States have accepted their responsibility for ensuring compliance.

In recent years, civil conflicts have become a major expression of violence. International humanitarian law is essential to deal with the consequences of these confrontations. Its enforcement, however, requires agreement on the minimum rules of respect for the civil population and the interests of States. The key to that enforcement is that humanitarian law — its postulates, norms and mechanisms — should be equally applied by all parties in conflict.

The movements of people, including refugees or migrants, must also be recognized as a priority issue. They are protected by a concrete framework of human rights. In a world that promotes the free movement of capital and free trade, it is unacceptable that unjustified

restrictions continue to be applied to the movement of people.

The solution to concrete problems on the international agenda necessarily requires concerted action and multilateralism; Colombia has always been and will continue to be firmly committed to it. We believe that this multilateralism can be supplemented by convergent regional initiatives and bilateralism as part of an approach to reduce distances and imbalances — in other words, a multilateralism that serves as a bridge for rapprochement, solidarity and shared responsibility, concepts upon which the entire building of the contemporary international order must be constructed.

Our peoples, in whose name the Charter of the United Nations was conceived, yearn to see how the fulfilment of the purposes and functions of the United Nations can be reflected in the satisfaction of their hopes and aspirations. Even though in many respects we are still far from this objective, we must preserve the gains achieved. An attitude of passivity is not convenient for the Organization. This Assembly must adopt decisions to reactivate the process of United Nations reform, on realistic grounds, but without further delaying the measures that require urgent implementation. There are many initiatives that can be realized without the need for reform of the Charter. The only thing required is the will to show solidarity and to make timely political decisions.

The United Nations acts as the world's conscience, requiring greater priority in order to meet the needs of the poor countries. Strategies must be urgently developed to mobilize funds to remove the causes of underdevelopment. The growing gap between the wealth of the prosperous and the poverty of those who are marginalized from progress is in itself an appeal for attention which should be listened to and should lead to the translation of words into deeds.

In this connection, we welcome the growing role being played by non-governmental organizations, whose activities should be accompanied by a proper definition of their responsibilities. For their part, the transnational corporations, which play such an important function in the global economy, should give serious consideration to the United Nations through financial support to the Organization, which is in urgent need of additional resources. This support could well be channelled towards United Nations poverty-reduction programmes.

The reform of the Security Council continues to be one of the principal reforms anticipated from the expected adjustment of multilateral political institutions. But in this area we need a gradual, less maximalist approach. Formulas must be explored to ensure greater participation of developing countries. We must take effective steps to promote greater representativity in the Council, on the understanding that this does not constitute a privilege, but rather a responsibility. Broader regional representation, restrictions on the use of the veto and greater transparency in the decision-making process could bring the Security Council closer to a reality that is not the same now in the twenty-first century as it was in 1945.

The election of new members to the Council will take place in a few weeks. Colombia has the support of Latin America and the Caribbean to be elected as a non-Permanent Member of this important organ. Once our entry is approved by the General Assembly, we will assume this responsibility as of 1 January. It will be an opportunity to reaffirm Colombia's commitment to, and confidence in, multilateralism and its resolute and unconditional commitment to the norms and principles of international law. We will also reaffirm our conviction that peaceful and negotiated solutions to disputes and respect for international humanitarian law by all parties to a conflict are essential in order to build firm and lasting foundations for peace and security. We will promote better functioning of the Council, especially in terms of information and consultation with States that are not part of that organ, and we will foster a more permanent and closer relationship with the General Assembly as the supreme organ of the United Nations.

Never before has humankind had the prospect like the one now afforded at the beginning of the new millennium to make steady progress towards peace, progress and international stability. It is an opportunity for the leaders of the world to make a decisive political step in that direction. Let us give our peoples new hope that the change in the millennium will signify not merely a chronological change but also the beginning of a true political and social transformation. Only thus will future generations recognize that we had the courage to assume our obligations with responsibility.

The Acting President: We have heard the last speaker in the general debate for this meeting.

Would anybody wish to take the floor at this stage?

I see none.

The meeting rose at 6.40 p.m.